SOCIALIST IDEAS & MOVEMENTS IN KASHMIR (1919—1947)

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Dedicated to my father and mother
for whom the Quran bids me
to pray, "My Lord, show
mercy unto them as they
nursed me mercifully
when I was little".

Preface

This book examines the Socialist Ideas and Movements in Kashmir, establishing the hypothesis that socialist ideas had been prompting the political movements in Kashmir during 1919-1947. Instead of defining socialism, it presumes that there is a universal urge among visionaries to design a just society for mankind. Let me call it humanistic socialism. This universal sentiment is reflected in the growth of socialist ideas and movements in all parts of the world and at all times. The book examines these universal tendencies and examines the extent of such an urge in Kashmir. I do not mean to claim this interpretation as the only explanation of ideas and movements in Kashmir. There can be more interpretations as well. However, I choose the socialist interpretation because I believe that economic and social justice is the universal urge of mankind.

Apart from the introductory chapter the book is divided into two parts, comprising six chapters. The first part deals with the socialist movements, whereas the second does so with socialist ideas in relation to the first. The study is historical : it traces ideas and movements in their historical perspective. These could later be used as a study of the performance as well, in which case it would evaluate the role played by the actors in the politico-historical drama, some of whom still play on. But that would have been hazardous, as all works involving living actors in power are.

As a research worker I am aware of the many defects in the work. In the first chapter the vast span of the period rendered me incapable of selecting appropriately the historical incidents and situations. The selection, therefore, has been more personal rather critical. In the second chapter, it was otherwise. The third chapter was to be pruned in the interests of precision, though the material available was vast. The fourth chapter, dealing with *Naya Kashmir*, could not be done justice for lack of documentation. I had to confine myself only to the editing of the document. The revolutionary ideas of Mahjoor and the socialist ideas of A. A. Azad presented the difficulty of translating their poetic works, which is not an easy task for a student of social sciences.

For the study of socialist ideas and movements in Kashmir my inspiration came from Professor Z. M. Quraishi, formerly Head of the Post-graduate Department of Political Science, University of Kashmir. It was he who encouraged me to go ahead with this research work. But for his guidance it would have been impossible for me to venture on this assignment. I am, therefore, all gratitude to him. Besides, I wish to thank especially my friends and colleagues of the Department of Political Science—Mr. G.H. Khan, Dr. M.K. Teng and Mr. R.K. Bhat—for their valuable suggestions and discussions with regard to it. I would also like to thank Mr. Sarwar, P.A. to Vice-Chancellor for typing and Mr. Nazir Ahmad, Assistant, in the Department of Political Science, University of Kashmir, for his valuable assistance.

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I was very fortunate to have had the assistance of Shri Z.L. Jalla, Reader, Department of History, University of Kashmir, who took pains to read through second and third chapters of the book—his suggestions are incorporated with gratitude.

Encouragement from Professor G. R. Bacha, Government College, Sopore, must also be gratefully acknowledged. The Muslim Educational Trust, Sopore, deserves gratitude for the financial assistance it provided me during the period of my study leave.

I need thank Pt. P. N. Bazaz, for having permitted me to use extracts from his book : "The History of Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir".

Further, I may add that this work could not have been accomplished but for the good wishes of my parents. I must also thank my brothers—Mr. Mansoor Ahmad Fazili (Agriculture College) and Mr. Rauf Fazili (Forests) —for their assistance and encouragement.

My family also deserve thanks for patience and understanding they showed during my Research work.

Originally, the work had resulted in the form of a thesis presented to the University of Kashmir for the award of Ph.D. Consequently, I need thank the University for having permitted me to publish it.

Needless to add that I alone am responsible for all the errors of omissions and commission in this work.

DR. MANZOOR A. FAZILI

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CHAPTER ONE

Socialist Ideas in Perspective

Socialism is a term which is easier to talk about than to define. Theorists have explained and interpreted it in so many different ways that a layman is often confused by their exercises. They have described its nuances and couched its definitions in ways which may not be universally acceptable. Its sentimental drag is, however, easy to appreciate by all and sundry. It is an emotional posture to procure justice for all. For thousands of years man has been exploited by man. "For thousands of years, under every kind of industrial society, the great mass of the world's burden bearers were doomed to lives of poverty and want, while the few lived in luxury..... And for these thousands of years, prophets, and dreamers of the world—some from the heart of the common people, some from the privileged classes of society—agonized over this tyranny, this oppression, this injustice".[1] Because of this injustice Marx found only classes, protecting their own interests, in the history of man. That is why he believed the history of all hitherto existing society as the history of class-

1. Harry W. Laidler, *Social-economic Movements*, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., p. 3.

struggles[1]. To him human history has shown classes in the form of freeman and the slave, patrician and the plebein, lord and the serf, guildmaster and the journeyman. In a word, according to him, oppressor and the oppressed, who stood in constant opposition to one another ; carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large or, in common ruin of the contending classes.[2]

The concept of socialism shall be understood in its historical perspective for, "the image of any society is a historically specific image".[3] Diverse versions of socialism, therefore, are produced by differences in appreciations of the conditions of oppressed, oppressors and the general character of social stratification. The varying evaluation of objective conditions determines the method of achieving socialism. Even a very carefully worked out theory of Karl Marx, predicting that the classes other than the revolutionary proleteriate would perish,[4] had to be modified in the light of subsequent historical development. To some, the only means of the salvation of mankind calls for the destruction of the state whereas to others, the mutation of all inequalities in the distribution of incomes is the main objective of socialism. Broadly speaking, the socialists only claim to glorify the community and thus seek human welfare. They aim at improving the external conditions of human life. To pave the way, the socialists propose to eliminate capitalism, competition and private enterprise. In the field of agriculture, they aim at expropriation of landlordism. Accordingly, socialists seek to achieve public and collective ownership of industries and land in order to produce under a national economic plan and for common good rather than for private benefit.[5]

1. Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, ed. H.J. Laski, London, George Allen, p. 119.
2. *Ibid*, p. 120.
3. C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, London, Pelican, 1966, pp. 160-180.
4. Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, ed. H.J. Laski, p. 130.
5. Herbert Morrison, *Outline of Modern Socialism* : An Essay, p. 9.

Varieties of Socialist Thought

The christians trace their socialism back to the old Testament. It is attributed to Amos, "a herdsman of Tekoa, and gatherer of sycamore fruit, born in the eighth century B.C.",[1] who condemned the vast inequalities amongst men. The Mosaic Code had a law which prescribed : "When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shall not wholly reap corners of the field for the poor and the stranger". The first word of Christ to his disciples was that the man with riches would hardly enter into the kingdom of God. The gospel according to St. Mathew recalls, "For every one that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth, and to knowth, it shall be opened".[2] The medieval christian reformers during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries defended their religion on the grounds that it advocated true socialism. Lammennais (A French Priest), Frederisck Denison Maurice, Charles Kingsley are some of the eminent advocates of christian socialism.

Similar socialist trends are found among Hindus as well. Although their social organization was based on caste system, yet their scriptures contain several passages highlighting equality, justice and community concern. For example, in book the third of Bhagvad Gita the poet says through Lord Krishna:—

Who eat of food after their sacrifice,
Are quite of fault, but they that spread a feast,
All for themselves, eat sin and drink of sin.[3]

Sentiments of justice, egalitarianism and fraternity abound in Islam. It obligates men and women, the rich and the poor, the slave and the master to equal treatment. It recognizes no distinctions of colour and race, nor does it admit

1. Harry W. Laidler, *Social-economic Movements*, p. 4.
2. St. Mathew, *The gospel*, Chapter VII, p. 9.
3. S.E. Arnold, Trans : *The Song Celestial or Bhagvad Gita*, Jaico Publishing House, p. 15.

claims of superiority by one nation over the other. It brings woman at par with man and makes the people to respect their neighbours. Peace and security for all non-muslims is guaranteed. Zakat has been prescribed as an instrument of establishing an egalitarian society as its main function is to redistribute wealth on an equitable basis. The holy Quran says:—

> "And I was commanded to dispense justice amongst you".[1]

Philosophers do not lag behind in being inspired by ideas resembling socialism. In a bid to build an absolute state planted on slavery, Plato was prompted by a folklore notion that political power in order to be upright in operation, should be divorced from possession of property. His programme of communism does not only abolish private property and nationalize families for the ruling classes but also seeks planned eugenics for superior breed and emancipation of woman for total mobilization of human resources. He disdained wealth for it produced "Luxury and idleness and a passion for novelty" and disliked poverty for it would lead to "meanness and bad workmanship and revolution in bargain".[2] His was an effort to restore communitarianism so pronouncedly existing in antiquity.

Plato's idealism stimulated many philosophers during the subsequent centuries, of whom Sir Thomas Moore was perhaps the most eminent. He wrote his utopia in Latin in 1515-16, when capitalism was only appearing in England and, therefore, his critique of new cultures was made and his model of a socialist society was built up from the vantage point of medievalism. Since the sixteenth century, many philosophers had been producing models of just societies as a part of their attack on the institution of private property and its evils.

1. Alquran : Alshura 15.
2. Plato, *The Republic*, edited by H.D.P. Lee, Penguin Classics, p. 167.

The socialism of nature is not unknown to political philosophy. It was introduced in France by Jean Jacques Rousseau. According to him, in the state of nature, man had no property. There were no industries. Such a state of affairs could not last long and a state arrived when man changed his previous way of living and began to live in settled groups. Social institutions gradually evolved. What a man had been contened to look upon as his mere possessions, after he had a given portion of land and a posterity to care for, he wished it to be regarded as his very own inalienable good and personal property. Consequently, the first man, who enclosed a plot of ground and he thought himself of saying—"This is mine and found others foolish enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society".[1]

Like Rousseau Morally and Mably found equality in the state of nature. To them private property was a misfortune of the civil society. Socialism of the nature influenced the Course of the French Revolution. The revolution, with its slogans of liberty, equality and fraternity, was considered a landmark in the annals of man but it failed in its objectives of removing inequality inherent in the form of private property and, hence, issue of socialist pursuit remained alive in France. Utopian socialism was a reaction to the state of affairs prevailing in the post revolutionary France. The spokesmen of the Utopian school of socialism denounced private property as a cause of all evils in human society.[2]

In its extreme form, socialist criticism of contemporary society adopted the course of anarchism as anarchists believed that it protected private property and privileges. They saw that the only way to organise society was to form a hierarchy of workers' groups from local level to international. Their revolutions aimed at demolishing the state. Their positive

1. Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Book I, Chap. I.
2. Claude de Routrey de Saint-Simon, Charless Fourier and Robert Owen.

programme sought to establish a reign of reason which would be derived from a joyful devotion to social duty and justice.[1]

The socialist idea assumes a scientific character at the hand of Karl Marx, who in collaboration with Friedrich Engels, studied history as well as political economy, with a view to establishing the inevitability of a socialist society. Examining the class system in ancient, medieval and contemporary times, he concluded that the history is materialistic and that "change and development in society, as in nature, take place in accordance with objective laws".[2]

Though philosophers had sought to procure justice for mankind, these efforts had been scuttled by the domination of the exploiting classes.[3] Marx was convinced that economic oppression of the workers would bring in, train all forms of political oppression, social humiliation, the degradation in the life of the masses in all aspects. He visualized a system of socialism that would end all exploitation and oppression. The contradiction between the productive forces and mode of production lead to human progress from one epoch to another. Each epoch, according to Karl Marx, carries a specific form of class-struggle. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, all present kaleidoscopic configuration of classes in history. The last form of class-struggle is between the bourgeoisie and the proletariate, carried on uninterruptedly (now hidden, now open) till the revolutionary reconstitution of society.[4] In this manner Marx establishes the inevitability of socialism by means of historical analysis.

The second plea (made by Karl Marx) was for the inevitability of socialism through economic analysis of capitalist society. While a commodity has a value because it is a,

1. William Godwin (1756-1836), Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), Machael Bakunin (1814-1876), Peter Kroptkin (1842-1921), Count Leo Tolstoi (1828-1919).

2. Maurice Cornforth, *Dielectical Materialism*, National Book Agency Private Ltd., Calcutta, 1965, p. 20.

3. Marx and Engels : ed. Laski, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 119.

4. Marx and Engels : *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Foreign Publishing House, Moscow, p. 52.

"crystallisation of social labour" its relative value is determined by laws of demand and supply, leaving a surplus value for the profit making class. "The surplus value, or that part of the total value of the commodity in which the surplus or unpaid labour of the working man is realised".[1] Marx calls it profit. This tendency leads to large scale agglomeration of industrial complex. While this provides larger markets and facilities of inter-communication, it also strengthens the workers contacts and intensifies their class consciousness. The profit making increases production and concentration of wealth, bringing down the purchasing power of consumers or alternately causing scarcity. Thus the crisis of boom and slump follow each other in circle paving way for a socialist revolution. The socialist society that would, thus, come into being provides an institutional system in which the control over means of production is vested in a central authority.

The Marxian socialism was criticised by Bernstein of Germany, Jean Jaures of France, Edouard Anseele of Belgium and Leonida Bissolati of Italy as well as some European socialist parties. These are called revisionists as they partly modified socialism with a view to giving it an evolutionary slant and freeing it of its programme of a violent proletarian revolution. For that matter they accepted the framework of the existing states within which they would achieve their socialist goals. Other post-Marxian socialist tendencies include Fabian socialism, and guild socialism in Britain, and syndicalism in France.

India claims socialism in its democratic form. It is embodied in Gita, as it strikes a balance between individual freedom and social welfare. In ancient India, it was a kind of egalitarianism and in nineteenth and first half of twentieth century, it meant struggle in bringing about equality and freedom for all the people. In the post-independence era, it is reflected in the programmes of various political parties, the Congress, the Communist Party of India and various other

1. Marx : *Wages, Prices and Profit*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, p. 39,

parties. It is also reflected in the Constitution of India, in the form of commitment to socialism. Gandhi Ji's dream of achieving egalitarianism through Panchayati Raj and Mr. Nehru's commitment to socialism, are the cornerstone in the total wisdom of Indian socialism. Jai Prakash Narayan's total revolution, in its essence, is nothing short of democratic socialism.

Ubiquity of Socialist Movement

The socialist thought finds its expression in political movements which have appeared throughout the human history. As such, they are inspired by revolutionary events that have been taking place from time to time. It is difficult to assess the precise extent to which American war of independence and the French Revolution have influenced socialist movements. But it is certain that the two events caused social upheaval among the underdog to aspire for egalitarianism and social justice.[1] The French were influenced by the American revolution. The sentiment, as observed by Harry W. Laidler, for the overthrow of French Monarchy was increased by the stand of the ruling house against all reform measures. The French had come to believe that they should do what the Americans had accomplished. "The belief in the need of revolutionary change was also constantly encouraged by growing commercial and industrial interests of the time desirous of wresting political power from the aristocracy. These were joined by the peasants and city workers, whose misery and extreme, and who were led to believe that an upheaval would mean for them liberty, equality, fraternity".[2]

The life conditions in seventeenth century were pretty harsh as three fourths of the people in Europe were leading miserable lives without leisure and luxury.[3] Many events unfolded

1. Wallace K. Ferguson and Geoffery Bruun, *A Survey of European Civilisation*, Houghton Miffin Company, Boston, p. 580.
2. Harry W. Laidler, *Social-economic Movements*, p. 45.
3. Wallace K. Ferguson and Geoffery Bruun, *A Survey of European Civilisation*, Houghton Miffin Co., Boston, p. 600.

themselves during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, highlighting growing dissatisfaction of the state affairs. The industrial revolution introduced new machines and tools increasing the production power of man, tremendously multiplying the centres of industrial concentration. Depicting the concentration, Harry W. Laidler observes : "Factories were springing up in every part of England, and wealth was accumulating beyond all credibility".[1] and quotes Wordsworth :

> Where not a habitation stood before,
> Abodes of men irregularly massed,
> Like trees in forests-spread through spacious tracts
> On which the smoke of unremitting fires
> Hangs permanent, and plentiful as wreaths
> Of vapour glittering in the morning sun.[2]

This lead to the emergence of a rich industrial class side by side with a poverty stricken working class marked the establishment of capitalism. As the evils of capitalism came to be felt more and more, the socialist ideas and movements became widespread and popular so much so that trade union organisations and political parties committed to socialism were founded in some states in Europe and they even captured government with a view to implementing their radical programme. While some of the parties in Europe were committed to Marxism, some others subscribed to democratic socialism and still others adopting an anti-Marxian theme. The former established "The first international" and later on "Second international" to coordinate their socialist programmes and to cooperate as socialist parties. Many socialist governments were inspired by the principles of socialism, inspite of their varied interpretations aimed at and tried to achieve social justice in one form or the other. However, Russian Revolution and later on the Chinese revolution, were

1. Harry W. Laidler, *Social-economic Movements*, p. 73.
2. Quoted by Laidler from Wordsworth's Excursion, Book VIII.

more definite and decisive in their objectives and international impact. With them, the socialist principles spread far beyond the confines of Europe into Asia, Africa and America.

This pageant of socialist ideas all over the world, multi-coloured and multi-formed as it is, testifies that the same basic sentiment for social justice is concretized in different shapes determined by varying specific local conditions, obtained in different parts of the world. May be it is Russian "Proletarian dictatorship", Mao's "New Democracy", British Fabianism or French Syndicalism, Christian socialism, Muslim or Hindu socialism or any other orientation of it, it is prompted by the same human urge within the framework of socio-economic levels and cultural components of society.

Kashmiri Perspective

The development of socialist ideas and movements in Kashmir throughout its history adopted a course peculiar to its own. The basic sentiment was the same but its manifestation was different. Its focus is the Kashmiri, an exploited, poor and an oppressed man reduced to a skeleton and "history does nothing, it possesses no immense wealth, fights no battles, it is rather man, real living who does everything, who possesses and fights".[1] Kashmiri also possessed and fought, for ideal of freedom and social justice has had several interpretations and emotional drag from age to age. Giving cognizance to the difference in the time gone by and the time when Kashmiri started his struggle for freedom and independence one is apt to remark that Kashmiri fought for justice and freedom during his history. Prem Nath Bazaz admits it in the words, "From times immemorial, Kashmir patriots have fought for both independence as well as freedom of their country. But bitter experience in life in the long history had taught them that if both could not be had together they should prefer freedom to independence".[2] Kashmiri had

1. Marx and Engels, *Ges amtanusgab, I, (iii) 625* quoted by E. H. Carr in *What is History*?

2. P. N. Bazaz, *Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, Pamposh Publications, Delhi, p. 125.

lived long under political systems which did not take care of his needs. His land was colonized by Kasyapa as early as in twentieth century B.C.[1] The Rajtarangni mentions the name of a noble king Gonanda I, who is regarded first one to ascend the throne of Kashmir. In the verse of Kalhana, Gonanda I is described thus :

> "The glorious king of Kashmir Gonanda was worshipped by the (northern) region which Kaitasa lights up (with its dizzling snow), and which the tossing Ganga clothes with a soft garment".[2]

H.H. Wilson accounts for hundred eighty four kings who later reigned including two ascending twice and one thrice ; some benevolent and some tyrant.

The death of Kota Rani marks the end of Buddhist and Hindu Rule in Kashmir. In rise or fall of these kings and queens is hidden the tale of woes of the Kashmiri, whose fate was not a matter of concern for these monarchs. However, there were some like Gonanda I, Jauloka, Vikramaditya and some more who tried to improve the lot of the Kashmiri subjects. Kalhana mentions Gonanda I as a sinless monarch, Jauloka brought about reforms in legal administration and carried Kashmir on the path of development in legal administration. He appointed seven ministers, a judge, a revenue superintendent, a treasurer, a commander of the army, an envoy, a purohita and an astrologer.[3]

Most of the kings died incapacitated but those whose accounts survive were oppressive in their rule. A leading king, known for his oppressive and unwise rule was Mehir Kula. He demonstrated his violent and cruel propensities. Two instances of this monarch's tyrannical disposition are

1. H.H. Wilson, *The Hindu History of Kashmir*, Susil Gupta, India, p. 10.

2. Kalhana's *Rajtarangni Book I*, Translated by M.A. Stein, Motilal Banarsidass, p. 12.

3. Ibid, p. 22. Kalhana refers to Vikramaditya as India's equal, protected the earth for forty two years along with his ministers, Brahman and Guluna. p. 114, V. I.

recorded by historians and chroniclers. One describes how to amuse his ears, the king ordered hundred elephants to be killed, in the manner in which one of his elephants had fallen, while proceeding along a narrow defile or gorge along the highway known as Moghul road. Another characterises him as the slayer of three million women. "A large stone fell into the bed of the Chandrakula river, and completely obstructed the current, the prince was instructed in a dream that its removal could only be effected by a female of unsullied virtue".[1] Women of high repute and all classes were called out but none could move it. He did not cease killing the women until the removal of the stone was effected by a female of low caste, the wife of a potter.

Very little is known of socio-economic system in ancient Kashmir, because the chroniclers are silent about it and perhaps the historians and chroniclers possessed primitive technique of interpreting and analysing the contemporary society. However, some glimpses of it are available in the political history of Kashmir. The economic structure in ancient Kashmir was mainly based on private property and ownership of wealth. Agriculture was not the only source of production as people took to trade, industry and other professions. "During the rule of the Kushans and later of the Karkotas, Kashmir came into direct contact with the commercial centres in India and Central Asia, which must have naturally given rise to a boom in trade and commerce. And hence we find a rich class of traders growing up".[2]

In addition, a rich class of traders that grew up during the Hindu rule, there were other classes also appearing on the scene in the course of history as mentioned in Rajatarangni. The dominating classes included elite belonging to the army, trade, commerce, agriculture, police and the priesthood.

The class stratification in the ancient Kashmir was based on the caste system as well, sanctioned by Hindu religion.

1 Wilson, n. 26, p. 25.

2. P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir*, Metropolitan Book Co., Delhi, p. 190.

Rajatarangni refers to the existence of castes like Brahmans, Vaisyas, Sudras, Nisadas and Kiratas. During this period Brahmans wielded immense power,[1] so that Purohita corporations resorted to hunger strikes (Prayoparesana). whenever, an action by the King or his ministers undermined their interests or those of the country. This is how Brahman class exercised effective check on the royal power. In fact, Brahmans were king-makers. It was assembly of Brahmans that elected Yasaskara as king in 960-3 A.D. The social stratification had placed, Vaisyas, Sudras, Nisadas and Kirtas at varying level of exploitation by the Brahmans and of the social system created by them. This caste ridden society was so oppressive that the consequential caste conflicts facilitated the exodus of thousands of people in renouncing their faith and embrace Islam.

Army too had a hierarchical system, breeding its own stratification Rajatarangni mentions Tantrins, Ekangas and Lavanyas as classes of professional soldiers. They were recruited from different tribes, exercised influence on the kings and rulers and accumulated riches by means of exploitation of people at large.

The landholding aristocracy constituted the most influential economic group in ancient Kashmir. The ruler granted them exclusive right to the ownership of land at his will and it was always a favourite who would get it. As a result, a land-owning class named in Rajatarangni as 'Damara'[2] emerged, threatening the rulers and exploiting the people. Two episodes are indicated in most of the historians with regard to power of the Damaras and their exploitation. One relates to the administrative wisdom of Lalitaditya who in a bid to control the 'haves' warned his successors not to leave

1. Ibid., p. 187.

2. " 'Damara' faced certain difficulties for its meaning and etymology. Petersburg Dictionary suggested that the word might have had originally a more general meaning—'riotous, rebel'. But the true purport of the term was recognized only in brief supplementary note of that work which reproduces a suggestion of Prof. H. Kern assigning to Damara the meaning, 'Bajor', i.e., feudal land-owner or baron" M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangni*, p. 304.

with the cultivators of the land more than necessary for their bare sustenance. He feared if they keep more wealth, they would be formidable Damaras, and would neglect the commands of the Kings. The anecdote also indicates that society was generally polarised for there was an absence of a middle class. Stein depicts the character of the polarization in an episode in these words :

> "It is unmistakably a representative of this class to whom we are introduced in the curious anecdote relating to the king. Avantivarman's visit to the shrine of 'Bhutesvara'. The temple priests, questioned by their royal visitor about the evident destitute condition of the shrine, ascribes it to Damara, a powerful Damara of the district (Lahara) who has appropriated the villages forming the temple endowments. Dhavana, who owes his unrestrained local predominance to the patronage of the king's powerful minister 'Sura', neglects summons after summons. When he ultimately arrives to receive his due punishment, he appears on the scene with a host of armed attendants. Kalhana clearly wants to describe to us here not a marauding hill-chief but a member of that land-grabing oligarchy which in his own time was threatening to destroy all remnant of royal power."[1]

This class, therefore, worked as a pressure group and often as king-maker, paving the way for a future revolution that shook the foundations of the then prevailing system.

Kalhana states that the inhabitants of the valley worshipped Nagas. That is why springs are considered sacred even today. Nilmatpurana relates in its initial chapter the presence of numerous Nagas in Kashmir. They were also considered deities. In addition, there were other minor gods and goddesses in Buddhism, Saivism and Vaishnavism. Although people were strongly religious-minded, there were many

1. Kalhana, n. 27, Vol. II, p. 305.

occasions when they fought for social and political emancipation. They resisted tyranny in all its forms. Kalhana writes :

> "When Naga worship was replaced by the early Brahmanical religion which later gave place to Buddhism, there was least tinge of violence or ill-feeling. And when finally Buddhism was again supplanted by the reformed Brahmanical creed, the change was brought about imperceptibly and without any outburst of violence. In fact, we find kings, queens, and courtiers not only building and endowing Hindu temples and Buddhist viharas and caityas but worshipping in all. Saivism and Vaishnavism flourished side by side and received equal homage from the king and the commoner".[1]

It is this humanistic attitude that is the source of socialist ideas in Kashmir.

Women too actively participated in social and political affairs during the period. They equally reflected the social dichotomy of patricians and plebiens. The former were educated and dominating whereas the latter illiterate and oppressed. There was no scope for socialistic notions to strike roots. Women belonging to the Damaras owned property in the form of land and jewellery. They enjoyed equal rights with men within the framework of their class. Sati was in vogue but Damara women did not practise it. "We have neither seen nor heard (of another such deed done) then by Kosthakas' wife, when her husband was thrown into prison, nobly followed him as a Sati."[2]

Though the divine origin of kings was the prevailing view and taken for granted, yet the people would not put up with the oppression. The administrative machinery was fairly elaborate ; there were the departments of Justice, Police, Revenue, Civil Services and the Armed Forces. But the state

1. Bamzai, n. 30, p. 176.
2. Kalhana, n. 27, Vol. II, p. 180 (Kosthaka, though his wound healed, became a prey to worms owing to some sins, and after many nights died in prison).

machinery was employed to maintain the royal hegemony and political oppression rather than for public welfare. When Harsa tried to curtail the power of the Damars, their intransigence was intensified instead of abating. Stein observes :

> "The exasperated Damars conspired with the refugee princes, Uccala and Sussala, and by a successful rising put an end to Harsa's rule and life. The reigns which followed this revolution, represent an almost uninterrupted series of struggles between the Central authorities and the Damaras, and between various factions of the latter themselves".[1]

In agriculture and commerce the peasantry and the worker suffered a great deal. Peasantry possessed no land and worked under tenancy. The labour was reduced to pauperism as they had no share in industry and commerce. It remained in the hands of wealthy travellers moving back and forth in central Asia and other parts of commercial importance. Thus, the workers and the peasantry remained exploited without any worthwhile share in fruits of their own labour. Their miseries became more acute in the wake of natural calamities.

The last phase of the Hindu rule saw a prolonged war of succession during which the subjects were completely neglected. Intrigues, rebellions and wars continued for twenty years and were cut short by the establishment of Muslim rule in Kashmir. The queen Kota, "a woman with an unbound lust for power",[2] ruled during this period when debauchery and licentiousness were rampant.[3] The foundation of authority were already sapped under Sahadevas' rule, which marked the beginning of the decay in financial and economic administration.

Sahadeva was a weak king though he ruled successfully for sometime with the help of his able Prime Minister, Ram

1. Ibid., p. 306.
2. Bamzai, n. 30, p. 168.
3. G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashmir : Being a history of Kashmir*, Punjab University Press, Lahore, p. 117.

Chandra. Ram Chandra was faithful and conscientious and Kota (Ram Chandra's daughter) provided constant help to him. But the overbearing barons, known as Kotas, protected by their castles and holding rich tracts of land, consistently flouted his authority. In these circumstances, the king always looked out for support.[1] Ram Chandra procured support from wherever it was available and when Rinchin came to Kashmir from Ladakh, he was given protection by Ram Chandra. Shah Mir, a Muslim adventurer from Sawat also came later to join Ram Chandra. When Kashmir was attacked by Dulchu, a Tartar chief from Central Asia, Sahadeva fled away to Kishtwar, leaving the affairs of the State to Ram Chandra. Dulchu, during his return, alongwith thousands of his men, was overtaken by a natural calamity and buried in a snow-storm. During this period, Kota played an important role in the resistance drive against the invaders who had expansionist designs. Rinchin who had become ambitious, found it propitious to revolt against Kota and seized the throne. Ram Chandra and his daughter took refuge in the strong fort of Lahara. Rinchin attacked the fort, killed Ram Chandra, hoisted his flag on it and became undisputed ruler of Kashmir. Rinchin was successful in bringing peace for sometime, but soon he was caught up by intrigues from abroad and led to the establishment of the Sultanate in Kashmir. He was the first Muslim ruler who was re-christined on conversion, as Sadruddin.

The Sultanate was founded in Kashmir, not as a result of a foreign aggression but by the emotional drag for egalitarianism. Hindu rule had been in decadance for nearly two centuries and tyranny had persisted in one or the other form. "The kings, who occupied the throne, were weak and their ministers corrupt ; the Brahmans were dissatisfied with the ruling class ; civil strife was almost continuous ; trade languished, and agriculture was at standstill".[2] Thus, under the circumstances, Shah Mir ascended the throne in 1339 A.D.,

1. Bamzai, n. 30, p. 168.
2. Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, Iran Society, Calcutta, p. 273.

putting an end to governments with corrupt ministers and administrators, civil strifes and low yield in trade and agriculture. He met virtually no resistance in establishing his dynasty. The Kashmiris were not disillusioned by their new rulers, for under the able rule of Shah Mir and his successors, trade revived, agriculture flourished, the burden of taxation was lightened, and their life and property were rendered secure.[1]

Shah Mir's ascendency relaxed and eased the situation for sometime, but soon after his dissonance ensued. Shah Mir was succeeded by Jamshed, Shahab-uddin and Qutbuddin. Then came to the throne Shah Sultan Sikandar, nicknamed 'Butshikan' or Iconoclast. He ruled for a period of twenty-five years. During these twenty-five years of his power, "Kashmir must have been dolorous".[2] With some exceptions, Shah Mir to Zainulabidin, a line of benevolent rulers followed. Zainulabidin, remembered, by the masses till today as the Badshah tops the benevolent kings.

Religious harmony was the special feature of this period. The rulers disregarded even 'Shariat' in their policies in order to inspire confidence among all classes and to maintain trust. Expediency, more often than not, prompted them in political affairs. The period, however, was characterized by exemplary religious toleration.

It was the feudal society and its class structure was similar to that of the Hindu period, with the difference that tyranny of feudal lords was abolished. The rulers were benevolent and had secured prosperity for the subjects. Zainulabidin ordered all the tenants, not to pay taxes to the Jagirdars. He regulated the profits of traders and merchants.[3] He constructed buildings and inns for the benefits of all, dug canals for irrigation and controlled the means of production in the interest of society at large.

1. *Ibid.*
2. W. R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, Kesar Publishers, Srinagar, p. 191.
3. Hassan, *Tareeki Kashmir*, translated by Molvi Abrahim, Noor Mohd. and Sons, Srinagar, p. 171.

The policy adopted by rulers in establishing and maintaining trusteeship during the period was inspired by Islamic spirit especially the fear of God. Many learned people such as Molvi Kabir, Mulla Ahmad, Mulla Parsa, Mulla Mohammed, Qazi Hamiduddin, Maulana Nadri, Mulla Chinai and Mulla Madyah, decorated the court of Zainulabidin.[1] Administration was, however, free of theocratic bias. This is evident in the fact that all those non-Muslims, who had fled away from Kashmir, were encouraged to return and settle down in Kashmir. "Many Kashmiri pandits", says Bamzai, "well versed in Sanskrit adorned his court".[2] They included Soma Pandit, Bodhi Bhat, Jonaraja and Srivara. The presence of such a large number of luminaries and the works they produced tell us the tale of religious harmony and socio-economic trusteeship that prevailed under the reigns of Zainulabidin and others during the Sultanate period in Kashmir. In the absence of any rules regarding succession, the death of a king would always become an occasion of civil war, causing hardships to the people. With the death of Zainulabidin, the incompetence of rulers, negligence of the subjects, corruption among the administrators, inequalities amongst people and exploitation of the poor became rampant. Civil wars ensued leading to political unrest under Haider Shah, Hasan Shah, Muhammed Shah and Fath Shah. This tolled the death-knell of the Sultanate. Feudal system persisted to provide the perspective of the reigns of benevolent kings but its harshness was ameliorated by their policies.

The policy of divide and rule was, an integral part of the general policy of these incompetent rulers. The Sultans and the Jagirdars deliberately aroused sectarian discord, between Shias and Sunnis for that matter. The ensuing civil wars weakened the administration, reduced the trade and agriculture and undermined the prosperity of the people. Most of the historians, agree that the Sultans of Kashmir maintained religious harmony upto the last descendents of Shah Mir who lost Kashmir because of interncine warfare and incompe-

1. *Ibid*, p. 176.
2. Bamzai, n. 30, p. 328.

tence. "But they were not bigots or religious fanatics. They were tolerant, forbearing and cultured".[1]

Unfortunately, says Lawrence, Zainulabidin did not bequeath permanent system of government to his successors.[2] This led to the rise of conflicting groups of urban aristocracy out of the confusion and Kazi Chak indulged in, to grip power after the reign of Zainulabidin. The Chaks were not the men to found a stable dynasty.[3] They got entangled in interncine wars and intrigues as much as the earlier kings. Some, however, were placed high in the eyes of people on account of their resistance to foreign threats and aggressions. Amongst those who became heroes were Kazi Chak, Yosuf Khan and Yaqoob Khan, though the last one was finally condemned. A relentless campaign of guerilla warfare took place and Moghuls were routed. Bombas and Kukas (martial races) who lived in the Jhelum valley, siding with the Chaks, caused heavy losses to Moghuls. The Chaks suffered as a result of their own intrigues as some of them conspired against Kashmiris and caused great hardships to people. In order to destroy socio-economic justice prevailing under Chak rule, some Hindus and Muslims invited Moghuls so that the rule of Chaks might be replaced. This is how Kashmir was reduced into a province of the Moghul Empire in 1586-87 A.D. and remained so, for quite sometime.

The valley continued to preserve the insurmountable problem of logistics even as a province of the Moghul Empire. The Empire was not able to overcome the difficulties caused by nearly complete breakdown of communication system during winters. Although Moghuls had an urge as well as resources to initiate economic development, they did not make any significant change in the political atmosphere and economic conditions in the valley. On the other hand, the exploitation and oppression of the people continued.[4]

1. G.M.D. Sufi, n. 38, p. 235.
2. Lawrence, n. 42, p. 192.
3. *Ibid*, p. 193.
4. *Ibid*, p. 203.

Moghuls placed Kashmir at the mercy of "short lived governors, ignorant of their language and customs, who worked their will on the Kashmiris regardless of the policy of courts of Delhi, Kabul and Lahore, and looked down upon Kashmir in the same light as that in which the Roman pro-consuls regarded Africa".[1] The valley could not, therefore, receive the personal attention of the Emperor. By the time Moghul empire entered into its period of decline and ultimate fall, Kashmiris had lost their initiative. The infrastructure that maintained the local decision making machinery, had been shattered. The Kashmiri ruling families of Chaks, Magreys and Dars had been replaced by Moghul officers as the local nobles were looked down upon as a source of mischief and their influence was circumscribed. Even the local army was disbanded.[2] In view of the policy of terror adopted by many of the governors, the prestige of Moghul Emperors suffered a great deal reaching its lowest ebb during Aurangzeb's successors. Mubarez Khan's Uzbeck retainers ill-treated people. Muzzaffar Khan, another governor amassed wealth which he had collected after imposing heavy taxes. Iftikhar Khan too won a lot of notoriety as communal-minded governor. Mir Ahmad Khan and Abdul Samad put Mulla Sharifuddin and many others to death. The rule of Moghul governors is still remembered in Kashmir for terror, dishonesty and oppression and this is depicted in the play "Moghul Pather". As a matter of fact, it was due to local sentiments against the Moghuls that facilitated the Afghan take-over in 1753 A.D.

Kashmir, a province of the Moghul Empire, passed into the hands of Shahani Durani and became a colony of Afghans. The Pathans ruled over Kashmir through governors who amassed wealth for themselves by exploiting local population. Many of the governors did not hesitate to pogrom. "It is said of them that they thought no more of cutting off heads than of plucking flowers".[3] They spared none of the Pandits,

1. *Ibid.*
2. Bamzai, n. 30, p. 459.
3. Lawrence, n. 42, p. 197. Lawrence quotes the Persian verse: "*Sir buridan Pesh in sangin dilan gulchidan ast.*"

Shias or Bombas of the valley. It is recorded that Asad Khan tied two Pandits together in grass sacks and drowned them in the Dal Lake. Pandits were forbidden to use 'Tika' on their foreheads, had to keep beards and use long turbans. The jazia or poll tax was revived forcing Pandits either to flee or get converted to Islam. Maddad Khan and Atta Muhammad Khan were more ferocious than Asad Khan.[1]

Kashmiris had already been demoralized under the Moghul rule. The Pathans demoralized them further by shattering the local economy. This led some nobles and Brahmans to conspire with Ranjit Singh to invade Kashmir, who had established his power in the neighbouring state of Punjab. Ranjit Singh's army defeated Jabbar Khan, the last Afghan Governor easily and the valley was annexed to the Sikh kingdom.

Sikhs were no better masters than those experienced by Kashmiris earlier. They were even more oppressive. Moorcroft saw "the semblance of extreme wretchedness"[2] of the inhabitants of Kashmir and apprehended that the country would soon be without inhabitants. Kashmir presented a ghastly picture of poverty and starvation during the period as depicted by W. R. Lawrence. He writes :

> "Yet wretched as they were, the relentless Sikhs would have levied a pice a head for permission to pass the post, had we not interfered. The Sikhs seem to look upon the Kashmirians as little better than cattle. The murder of a native by a Sikh is punished by a fine to the government from sixteen to twenty rupees, of which four rupees were paid to the family of the deceased if a Hindu, two rupees if he was a Muhammadan. The body of a stout youngman whose throat had been cut, was lying close to the road on one part of this day's journey, and the only notice taken of it was by Mardan Ali, the Malik, who ordered it to be covered with grass, that our porters might not be frightened by the sight. Three other bodies were met with on the

1. *Ibid*, p. 198.
2. Moorcroft, *Travels in Hindustan, Part III*, Chap. II, p. 235 and pp. 293, 294 as quoted by W.R. Lawrence.

> route ; those were some of the followers of Jawahir Mal, who, to the number of forty-five, it was asserted, had perished in crossing the pass lately, in rough and cold weather, against which they were ill defended by clothing or shelter. Some of the people accompanying us were seized by our Sikhs as unpaid porters, and were not only driven along the road by a cord tying them together by the arms, but their legs were bound with ropes at night to prevent their escape.[1]

The condition of the people as such was deplorable. Society was divided into three classes—the upper, the middle and the lower. The upper class comprised landlords belonging to all religious communities but mostly Sikh Sardars. The wealthy Karkhanadars wielded political power. Kashmiri Pandits generally constituted the middle class, performing economic functions as capitalists, monopolized marketing of the manufactured goods like shawls and administrative functions as government officials. The capitalist supplied the material and instruments to the labour which was kept in perpetual debt under the obligation to incessant work :

> The economic classes in the shawl industry—which formed the main industry of Kashmir, employing thousands of men and women—were the same as in the present day industrial world with the difference that the condition of the worker was worse and much of the burden of taxation of the shawl trade fall on him.[2]

The consequent alienation of the shawl workers brought about the fall in shawl trade.

By the Treaty of Amritsar, Gulab Singh, the Dogra, took over the valley from the Sikhs. He, however, would not have succeeded in occupying Kashmir, if he had not sized upto the situation created by Sheikh Imamuddin. The Sheikh,

1. Lawrence, n. 42, p. 199.
2. Bamzai, n. 30, p. 626.

who was the Governor of the Sikhs in Kashmir, routed the Dogra troops. Thereupon, Gulab Singh had to invoke aid of the British in order to take possession of the valley. This makes it abundantly clear that the "Dogras were strange foreign rulers",[1] who were subservient to the British, who in turn were virtually the masters of the sub-continent. The only dimension of the ascendency of Dogras in Kashmir marks the beginning of the history of Jammu and Kashmir State as a political entity.[2] Dogras ruled the State upto 1947.

In the course of Kashmir history upto the Dogra Rule, oppression and exploitation were rempant, which induced sharp humanistic reactions, often obliging rulers to grant reforms that can be characterized as trusteeship. Dogras were no exception to it. They authorised reforms but oppression and exploitation could not be weeded out. This could be construed to the political system, Dogras imposed on the people and the changes brought in the world scene both by the first and the second world wars. The conditions were, therefore, ripe during this rule, as against the humanistic considerations alone, for socialist movements and ideas to emerge out.

The first labour movement appeared on 6th June 1847, one year after the Treaty of Amritsar. The shawl weavers, who were concentrated in Srinagar and its suburbs under an organised leadership, struck work and about 4,000 of them set out for Lahore to present their demands.[3] Maharaja Gulab Singh, then ruler of Kashmir, however, did not permit them to proceed and instead promised the redressal of their grievances, abolished the system of indenture, fixed minimum wages, introduced a rational system of taxation on shawl production. Inspite of an incremental reform, the miseries

1. P.N. Bazaz, *The History of the Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, Pamposh Publications, Delhi, p. 127.

2. V.P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of Indian States*, Orient Languages India, p. 373.

3. *A Hand Book of J & K State*, 1945, J & K Government, The Rambir Press, p. 23.

of the people did not really abate in view of the other new taxes that were introduced by him. K. M. Pannikar admits that Gulab Singh, "did not achieve his ends by methods which were always beyond criticism. He did not hesitate to resort to tricks and stratagems which would, in ordinary life, be considered dishonourable. He was trained in a hard school where lying, intrigue and treachery were all considered part and parcel of politics".[1]

Ranbir Singh who succeeded him in 1858, increased the burden of taxes still further. Every commodity was taxed; the manufacture of shawl, wool that entered the valley, workmen, every stage or process of shawl manufacture, butchers, hawkers, carpenters, boatmen and even prostitutes were taxed. This forced the labour movement to resort to organized action. The first organized action took place in 1865 A.D. A procession of industrial labourers met in open at Zaldagar in Srinagar to protest against tyranny perpetuated by Pt. Raja Dhar, the then minister in charge of labour and shawl industry. The representatives of the labour met Diwan Kripa Ram, the governor of Kashmir. Raja Dhar misrepresented the case and gave Kripa Ram an impression that the labourers were against Kripa Ram's life and intended to undermine his administration by initiating riot. Accordingly Diwan Kripa Ram ordered their arrest. Army went in the ranks of the labourers, some of them harassed and some killed. Many of them were drowned in the Nalla near the bridge at Haji Rather in Srinagar. Twenty-eight men were drowned. Many had already been killed after having been injured at Zaldagar.[2] The workers searched for the corpses of their drowned co-workers, recovered them from the Nalla (Kota Kul) during the night and took them out in a procession the following day. The procession was dispersed by army and the police under the orders of Wazir Punoo, Diwan Badri Nath and Colonel Bijay. In the evening of 29th April, 1865, all the

1. K.M. Pannikar, *Gulab Singh*, Martin Hopkinson Ltd., London, 1930, p. 152.
2. Hassan, n. 43, p. 577.

labour leaders, responsible for the movement who had led the procession included Rasul Sheikh Tanki Kadal, Gudah Lalla, Abli Pal and Sona Shah were arrested. They were confined to within the walls of Shergarhi, were tortured and killed. Rasul Sheikh and Abli Pal died in Jammu jail and Quddah Lalla and Sona Shah died in Srinagar.[1] It is pertinent to recall here that in 1865 A.D. Robert Thrope, a British national, sacrificed his life for the cause of egalitarianism in Kashmir. His mother belonging to Kashmiri race and culture, motivated him to visit Kashmir. He remained in Kashmir for sometime, informed his European brethren about the oppression, exploitation, and tyranny perpetuated against the innocent Kashmiris in his book "Kashmir Miss Government". He was murdered by the men at the helm of affairs for the cause for which Kashmiri had been fighting for many a century in the past.

The economic consequences of the tyrannical rule were far-reaching. There were famines, depletion of labour and decline in production. The state had already run into bankruptcy when Maharaja Pratap Singh succeeded to the throne of Kashmir in 1885 A.D. As a result, the State revenues were further reduced. The miserable conditions of the valley have been depicted by Sir W. Lawrence :—

> "The rich land was left uncultivated and the army was employed in forcing the villagers to plough and sow, and worse still, the soldiers came at the harvest time and when the share of the State had been seized and these men of war had helped themselves, there was little given to the unfortunate peasants to tide over the cruel winter when the snow lies deep and temperature falls below zero. Every thing save air and water were under taxation."[2]

The people were finding it difficult to survive. The inarticulate masses were struggling for their mere survival under the

1. Taseer Rashid, *Tareekhi-Huriati Kashmir*, Mahafiz Publications, Srinagar, pp. 11-12.
2. S.W. Lawrence, *India We Served*, p. 128.

despotic rule of the Maharaja and the exploitation by richest class consisting of 'Sahukars', 'Zaildars', 'Kardars', 'Mansabdars' and so on.

During the Dogra rule, as vassal of the British India, Kashmiris sought economic justice through the good offices of British rulers. Many memorials were presented to the British Government in India on behalf of the individuals and associations. One of the memoranda "was stealthily submitted to the British Viceroy at Delhi by some unknown Kashmiris making specific charges against Ranbir Singh".[1] The British Government in India instituted an enquiry into the grievances but none came forward to substantiate them. Taking advantage of the petition, however, the imperialist rulers, proposed to appoint a British resident in Kashmir in place of the officer on special duty which the Maharaja had to accept willy nilly.

The strategic location of Kashmir had already evoked British interest in the affairs of the State. Kashmir had geographical proximity with Russia and, therefore, the Maharaja of Kashmir was impelled to respond to British overtures of friendly cooperation favourably. Maharaja Pratap Singh had to yield to British pressure and a council headed by Raja Amar Singh and two selected members from British India. Nevertheless, some reforms specially in the administrative sphere were prompted. They suggested to the Maharaja a plan of administrative reforms. The reforms involved a process of bureaucratization calling for recruitment from outside the State. These reforms, made British intervention inevitable through their stooges but instead of ameliorating the grievances of the people it enhanced their miseries.

Pratap Singh's rule marks further deterioration in the conditions of the State. Trade and commerce declined by 5,87,983 maunds (217553.71 kg) due to the high prices of commodities and the shortage of the goods traffic on the railways.[2] Administration was in doldrums, 'Mulkis' had no

1. Bazaz, n. 57, p. 132.
2. Copy of a letter No. 10519 dated 3rd November 1919 from Prime Minister of J & K to the Revenue Minister.

share in it, forced labour was rampant, and the rulers resorted to suppression through the policy of 'Divide and Rule'. Most of the administrative officers were infiltrated into the government from Punjab or from the British India. The army organisations were employed to execute the policies of the government. The hand book of the government of Kashmir admits that the sepoys who attended at harvest to coerce the cultivators were removed.[1] It also mentions the assistance rendered to the British empire during the war of 1914-15. It says :

> "The contribution of the State during the war in manpower was the highest (31,000) among all Indian states. The cost of maintaining the troops sent overseas came to rupees 1,11,00,000. In addition, the State contributed three-fourths of a crore to the war loan. Battle Honours were won by the State forces in several fronts in East Africa and Palestine."[2]

The labour and the peasantry were also upset by the deteriorating conditions and the unwise steps of the government. They were seething with discontent.

There are two events which clearly spell out the style of government in dealing with genuine expression. The first event was a strike by workers in silk weaving factory in the summer of 1924, which was ruthlessly suppressed by the authorities. The government intended to instal some machinery in the silk weaving factory which was imported from Italy. This anticipated the reduction of the workers in the factory. The government had failed to take a decision with regard to the workers who were rendered unemployed. The workers reacted, struck work. The government was for the first time challenged for corruption, nepotism and tyranny. The authorities had taken to cheap means to retain some workers and oust some. The rulers called a high level meeting to meet the situation, in which gentry from Srinagar, the

1. *The Hand Book*, n. 59, p. 29.
2. *Ibid*, n. 59, p. 30.

representatives of police and the Director, Silk Weaving Factory, presented themselves. No solution could emerge because it was not represented by the labour. The then Governor of Kashmir, Anant Ram, therefore, gave police a free hand to meet the situation. Consequently, the uprising was sternly suppressed, many being injured and many had to flee.[1]

The other was a protest by villagers in Anantnag District arising out of a dispute as to the possession of certain plot of land, alleged to have belonged to the State. The Muslims of the area desired the land to be handed over to them for religious purposes. This uprising resulted in a mass resentment because the authorities ruthlessly suppressed it.[2] Although the popular aspirations were suppressed, the memories of the events remained alive to invoke further resentment and to determine future course of events.

In the wake of these developments the Maharaja had become aware of the courses of events. The political consciousness of the people had touched new horizons. The Maharaja was instructed by British masters to introduce constitutional reforms as a deterrent to the Russian threat on the borders of Kashmir. British Government had already taken over Gilgit in 1877, appointing a Political Agents as an officer incharge of the area. In 1881, he was withdrawn but in 1889 the agency was re-established. The Agency comprised the chief-ships of Hunza and Nagar and the governorships of Punial, Yasin, Kuh-Ghazir and Ishkoman.[3]

The people of Kashmir, seeking economic, social and political justice saw through the time. They could feel the pulse of the British Government. Thus few bold leading Kashmiri Muslims submitted a memorial to Lord Reading in 1924 A.D. and "demanded proprietary rights of land for the peasants".[4] The signatories were arrested, some of them were,

1. Taseer, n. 62, Vol. I, p. 66.
2. Gwasha Lal, *Kashmir : Past and Present*, Vol. II, Chronicle Publishing House, 1946, p. 45.
3. *A Hand Book*, n. 59, p. 27.
4. Bazaz n. 57, p. 138.

however, released after they had given a surety of their good behaviour. Sir Walter Lawrence was appointed the first Settlement Commissioner to provide a surer system of settlement. It goes to his credit that he prepared the first settlement of the State. Further, he recommended that the Begar (forced labour) might be abolished and those peasants who had abandoned their lands owing to government excesses might be recalled to settle back on their lands for cultivation. This settlement had far-reaching impact on the shaping of future land tendency in Kashmir.[1]

Inspite of the reforms in land occupancy and changes in the administration and politics owing to the intervention of the British Government, the accession of Maharaja Hari Singh, succeeding Maharaja Pratap Singh in September 1925, saw no substantial change in socio-economic fulcrum in the State. The stipulated land reforms were still in confusion. Ejection of labour from the land could be possible on very flimsy grounds by the landlords and by any revenue officer. The state demands on land occupancy were still not fixed.[2] Thus agriculture was giving poor dividends to the peasantry.

The forests were monopoly of a privileged class, the officers of the department were letting the terror loose. Corruption was institutionalized which still persists in the form of 'Rassum' a kind of bribe paid to the forest watchers in kind. The timber trade was deteriorating. In the progress report of the Forest Administration, the Government of J. & K. confesses :

> "The year under report had to pass through great stress of depression. The universal world-wide slum had its unfavourable repercussion on the timber trade, with the result that the prices of timber shrank considerably and disposals become very difficult."[3]

1. *A Hand Book*. n. 59, p. 29.
2. *Regulation Muzarian* (Urdu), Sri Ranbir Prakash Press, J. & K. Government Publication 1933 articles 2, 16, 44-46, pp. 6, 4 and 30.
3. *Progress Report on Forest Administration in J. & K. State*, 1930, The Kashmir Mercantile Press, p. 2.

The insecurity of life was in vogue because Army was purely Rajput oriented. No section of the people except Rajputs were represented. Dogras never thought Kashmir their own land and, therefore, were apprehensive of Kashmiris. The same was conventional with other departments of the government. Rajputs, in addition that they were recruited in the army, were also permitted to possess arms in the name of their religion. The article III of the J. & K. Arms Rule Act with regard to the possession of arms provide,

> "The possession of fire arms together with the ammunition required, therefore, by Hindu Rajput families, by reason of their being objects of religious worship, at the rate of one fire arm for each such family."[1]

Pandits were disgruntled and frustrated by their growing unemployment inspite of their education.[2]

The shawl makers were already in disarry[3], the trade was showing a decline, and workers were discontent. These all factors had resulted in corruption, favouritism and nepotism. The people, therefore, were rethinking so that they could reshape and share the power in the State in future.

1. *Jammu and Kashmir Arms Rules*, 1998 BK and Instructions thereunder, Jammu, Ranbir Government Press, p. 1.

2. In a written statement (appendix IV) of Pt. P.N. Bazaz, the then President Sanatan Dharam Youngmen's Association, Srinagar, before "Srinagar Riots Enquiry Committee". An abstract of the illustrative list of qualified (unemployed) Kashmiri Pandits is as under :

A.	1. M.A., LL. B.	...	2
	2. M. Sc.	...	3
	3. M.A.	...	4
B.	1. B. Sc.	...	7
	2. B.A., B.T.	...	1
	3. B.A.	...	45
C.	1. F. Sc.	...	2
	2. F.A.	...	65
D.	1. Matriculates	...	438

(The witness to the Court alleged that the list was not exhaustive, Jammu Ranbir Govt. Press, 1931, p. 88).

3. See Foot Notes 2 p. 28 & 1 p. 29.

Whatever the defence by the sympathisers of the Dogra regime, there can be little doubt that by 1929 A.D. the people of the valley had ceased to possess many virtues and creative faculties. Sir Albion Bannerji, Minister of Political and Foreign Affairs resigned from the ministership and admitted it at a press conference at Lahore on 15th March 1929 A.D. He said :

> "Jammu and Kashmir State is labouring under many disadvantages, with a large Muhammadan population absolutely illiterate, labouring under poverty and very low economic conditions of living in the villages and practically governed like dumb driven cattle. There is no touch between the government and the people, no suitable opportunity for representing grievances and the administrative machinery itself requires overhauling from top to bottom to bring it up to the modern conditions of efficiency. It has at present little or no sympathy with the people's wants and grievances.
> There is hardly any public opinion in the State. As regards the press it is practically non-existent with the result that the government is not benefited to the extent that it should be by the impact of healthy criticism."[1]

The press conference suddenly drew the attention of Indian public to the plight of Kashmiris. Both Muslim and Hindu youngmen were shaken by it. These young educated had an opportunity to complete their education in British India and had learnt many revolutionary ideas. They had organized pressure groups of sympathisers and well wishers outside and inside the state, who continuously lobbied for the Kashmir's cause in Marxist terminology to wage war, raging within existing society to reach a point wherefrom war breaks out into open revolution[2]. These conditions provided the perspective of organised political movement which had a somewhat revolutionary zeal and elemental socialist ideas.

1. Quoted by Bazaz. n, 57, p. 141.
2. Marx and Engels, n. 2, p. 134.

The new political atmosphere was eloquently expressed by means of two organizations : Reading Room Party and Youngmen's League. The Reading Room Party was a public body founded to articulate and organize the public opinion with a view to exerting pressure on government for constitutional reforms and if need be to revolt, with concerted and organized platform, at a time when conditions were conducive for the same. The party was, in no case a party of a political nature, but "informally formed because there existed no freedom of association".[1] This party, therefore, ostensibly gave its members a protection in the eyes of law, whereas, it used the organization for political purposes. Mohd. Rajab, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Mufti Jalaluddin, Hakeem Ali, Peerzada Ghulam Rasool, Peerzada Ahmad Shah Fazili, and Hakeem Ghulam Murtaza were some of its prominent organizers. The organization constituted revolutionaries to spread revolutionary ideas amongst all sections of the people.

The other organization was the Muslim Younmen's League which was a secret organization. The objective of the organization was to prepare ground for a movement which could achieve economic and political independence for the state. Its activities were not confined to few sympathisers but to general public for converting them into the membership or the overall participation in the movement. Amongst its prominent members were Kh. Ghulam Ahmad Ashai, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, Kh. Ali Mohammad Shah, Hakeem Ali, Hakeem Mohammad Safdar, Khaja Mohammad Rajab, Hakeem Ghulam Murtaza, Ghulam Rasool, Ahmad Shah Fozili, Peerzada Ghulam Ahmad, Ghulam Hassan Khan, and Khaja Ahsanullah. Kh. Ghulam Ahmad Ashai and other revolutionaries had organized it to prepare youngmen for political shake up. All of its members were underground workers to activize the political consciousness. The members were mostly educated and could be termed as the "closed elite" of the political party that had to fight and

1. P.N. Bazaz, n. 57, p. 143.

struggle for the independence of the state. The movement for the political changeableness was to begin. Both the organizations had organized different cells to eulogize its programmes and all over the state a feeling had been aroused to fight out the Dogra rule. The impact of these organizations and cells was tremendous. The leadership, by them, had unified all sections in Kashmir and consequently a political party emerged. The party, by 1931, rose stronger, firmer and mightier and set itself in an organized movement. The movement is not wholly socialist, but in the pursuit of egalitarianism, it is right to assert that it has elements of socialism in its essence, programme and in its operations.

CHAPTER TWO

Socialist Urges of an Incipient Movement

Causes

The first upsurge took place in July 1931. Several factors external and internal impelled the rebellion, which met some of its objective successfully, particularly in falsifying the claims of the Dogra ruler and his favourites. It was able to break the arbitrary rule of the Maharaja, who made efforts to associate some elements of local populace, through limited participation, with the administration.

The circumstances that led to the July rebellion, as a desperate struggle for the people to survive the economic plight in the wake of inflation in Europe and elsewhere, were many. There was an economic collapse after 1929, that struck the world nations as under. There were four main reasons for the same. First, the production had outgrown the consumption ; secondly, expenditures were mostly based on "paper profits" ; and thirdly, a wave of panic struck the New York stock market in September 1929 ; finally scarcity of capital resulted in decline of purchase exports throwing all nations in the

gloom of inflation. Kashmir was also hit hard.[1] Kashmir was already an isolated place but whatever little trade it had was reduced considerably due to inflation. The trade with central Asia had fallen and goods traffic on all sides of the valley had gone down.

The land tenure system was the most sensitive issue in Kashmir. The land was held by Zamindars either in "Haqiassami" or in direct tenancy under the State. The actual "assamidar" had all the rights of a proprietor, except that he could not dispose it off by sale or mortgage, as the state was theoretically supposed to be the real owner of the land. The tenants at will, however, held land subject to the right of the proprietor, to eject at will the cultivators at any time. The second category included a large number of Zamindars who had been found to have encroached upon huge 'khalsa' areas and brought them under cultivation.[2] The government records show that many of the tenants were in the bondage of the land-owners. They were serfs of a high order and constituted a considerable section of the population. The land-lords had full rights to eject them from the land, including the encroached areas. They were required to yield as much produce as their lords would fix or the government officials demanded. The "Misal-i-Haqqiat" (Records of Rights), incorporated all facts relating to each holding and field, including areas, class of soil, source of irrigation, number and kind of trees, rights of holders and tenants, rents, revenue and cesses, village customs, details of Jagirs, revenue free grants, genealogical tables of land-owners. As a document it consolidated the rights of the land-owners. No rights of small farmers, agricultural labour and other cultivators were recognized over the land and its produce.[3] To this we added, their exploitation by the money-lender (Sudar), the Numberdars and Zaildars, who would charge interest on debts and would also realize from them a Numberdari Cess.

1. W.K. Ferguson & G. Bruun, *A Survey of European Civilization*, Mifflin Company, 1958, p. 908.

2. His Highness Government of J & K, *A Handbook of J and K State* Ranbir Government Press, Jammu, 1947, pp. 13-14.

3. *Ibid*, pp. 15 & 16.

Maharaja Hari Singh's administration left the workers, labour, farmers and all others in doldrums on account of misgovernment. This plight of these classes is described by a witness before one man commission appointed to scrutinize the grievances of the people and enquire into the disturbances of 13th July 1931 in the following words :

> "The public at large in Srinagar is unemployed...and Pashmina-weavers, embroiders, sculptors etc. are sitting idle. The result is that very many people are idle and starving. They naturally form associations for improvement...The world-wide depression has affected this State as well."[1]

The State in the field of education had an embarrassing position. In 1921, literacy in the State was assessed at 26 per thousand, which had risen to 41 per thousand by 1931, of which Kashmir province recorded 35 literates per thousand only.[2] This had created a resentment amongst the masses in the valley of Kashmir, Muslims forming the majority, on the ground that they were discriminated against Jammu non-Muslims.

The Maharaja adopted an unwise policy towards his subjects in almost all spheres of life. He sought unflinching obedience from Jammu people on account that he professed the same religion as they and Pandits of Kashmir were asked to be faithful to him for the same reason. This policy made him pursue the path that rights should be denied to the subjects. Scoring out all civil liberties to the subjects, he even denied them the right to press and platform. The Maharaja doubted the allegiance of the Muslim and it made him apprehensive in the dispensation of his powers. In the demands of the leaders of the freedom movement, we often find a craving for the freedom of press and platform. One witness, sum-

1. Written Statement, Part I (English), Srinagar Riots Enquiry Committee, July 1931, Ranbir Government Press, p. 127.
2. A Handbook, n. 2, p. 12.

marising the demands, before "Riots Enquiry Committee", puts the freedom of press and platform as the first item like :

> "Freedom of the Muslim press and platform may be granted subject to the respecting of the law of the land."[1]

The Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir as promulgated by the Maharaja Bahadur of Jammu and Kashmir on 7th September 1939, envisaged no fundamental rights or any kind of liberties for subjects. This Constitution was promulgated in response to the rebellion of 1931 and as such one could imagine the plight of the people before 1931. Even as late as 1939, Maharaja retained with him all legislative, executive and judicial powers under article V of the said Constitution in the name of inherent powers.[2]

Finally, the rebellion may be deemed to have been caused by the British manoeuvres. In the global strategy, British required a close watch over the northern borders of Kashmir, linking J & K State with Red Russia. Logistics required that the British should occupy the State. Moreover, the British were apprehensive of Maharaja Hari Singh because he had preferred Nationalism to British imperialism in his speech at Round Table Conference in London. Mr. Wakefield, during the time, a minister in Maharaja's Cabinet was considered a British national to further a design of rebellion against the Maharaja so that the latter could be compelled to surrender to British power of intervention. Mr. Gwash Lal, B.A., a witness before the Enquiry Commission believes Wakefield to have worked against the Maharaja : "By gathering together the rowdy and unsatisfied elements in the Muslims, working them up to a certain degree of temperature, then take them up as exigencies of the circumstances demanded".[3]

1. Written statement, n. 4, p. 152.
2. The J and K Constitution Act of 1996 (XIV of 1996), 7th September, 1939, Kashmir Mercantile Press.
3. Written statement, n. 4, p. 46.

Sequence of Events

These internal and external causes resulted in the sequence of events both important and distinctive in the history of Kashmir. The Maharaja of Kashmir, on a tour abroad, was awaited eagerly by his subjects. Pt. Bala Kak Dhar, Wazir Baramulla invited to his residence many Zaildars, Numberdars and the gentry to decide upon the arrangements for the reception of the Maharaja. Muslims did not see eye to eye with Bala Kak Dhar's unilateral and self-styled leadership to accord reception to the Maharaja. Though the idea was warmly welcomed by all, yet, "Muslims present at his residence, subsequently believed that the idea of a joint tea party was conceived only to place the Pandit at their head as President and in order to secure him an advancement with the help of Muslims, which at a subsequent meeting of Muslims, they refused to lend."[1] Muslims, therefore, dissented from the proposal, convened a meeting at Khanyar and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah took a prominent part in it. This resulted in temporary polarization in community politics. However, when later on Muslims approached Maharaja for the accord of reception and tea party, he refused it. The refusal was attributed to pressure tactics of Pandits. The discord, which the most contemporary historians interpret as a communal one, was only a matter of difference in opinion. A dispassionate reader of contemporary history of Kashmir has a right to ask a pertinent question as to the validity of offering presidency to a person who had non-representative character on being Wazir of Baramulla District. This would have meant minority goal imposed on majority goals.

During this tension between the communities on account of reception to be accorded to the Maharaja, some more events aggravated the situation. Some posters alleging defilement of Quran by a Hindu Police Sergeant Labba Ram and alleged interference in the recitation of *Khutba* at Jammu, on the walls of mosques, shops and buildings in Srinagar,

1. *Ibid*, p. 196.

was enough provocation to the people to rebel.[1] Their sentiments were injured and emotions were let loose to drift for action. Further, a rumour, spread far and wide, Kashmiris being expert in institutionalizing rumours, that some of the pages of Quran were alleged to have been dropped in a latrine by a Kashmiri Pandit. These developments appeared in sensational articles in the "Kashmiri Musalman" leaving a "deep impression on Muslim youngmen of the State resulting in the disturbances of the political atmosphere of the country".[2] As a consequence mass meetings were held at Khanaqah-i-Mualla, Jamia Masjid, Hazratbal, Batamalu in Srinagar and elsewhere.

A meeting to protest against these accidents was held at Khanaqah-i-Mualla, at the close of the meeting a certain person, Mr. Abdul Qadeer by name, resident of Peshawar, a private employee of one Major Bott, in whose company he had come to Srinagar, delivered an inflammatory speech before the people and was arrested. A criminal case was instituted against Mr. Abdul Qadeer. However, proceedings could not run a chance in an open court. The authorities, therefore, shifted the venue of the court to the premises of the Central Jail and court was scheduled to sit on 13th July 1931.

Earlier, on 9th July, 1931, the Governor of Kashmir read out a message from His Highness to his subjects, in the exhibition grounds, promising enquiries into grievances pertaining to majority community.[3] The message was formally rejected, in a mammoth meeting held in Jamia Masjid, on 10th July, 1931. Addressing the masses on the day, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah remarked that Mr. Abdul Qadeer was being prosecuted for the Muslim masses and that the meeting should not only pray for his acquittal but express complete solidarity with him. Later, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah delivered a fiery speech in a mosque at Batamalu. It is

1. *Ibid*, pp. 26 and 27.
2. *Ibid*, p. 3.
3. *Ibid*.

reported that he stated before the public, "Be prepared to be sacrificed for the sake of helpless (Mr. Qadeer) man in prison and that he was being prosecuted for them", requesting them to raise subscription for miscellaneous expenses.[1]

As a consequence, the people in Srinagar were anxious to assemble near the premises of the jail quarters at Khujayarbal, on 13th July 1931, the trial day. The people thronged in thousands near the jail, entered the main gate and what happened is described by the governor of Kashmir in the following :

> "Four or five persons were arrested by the police and a few were pursued. Thereupon, the mob assaulted the police from different sides and showered stones. The Lathi police immediately ran to their relief but in vain. The mob had become highly excited and stoned freely. The police officials were wounded. Some under-trial prisoners coming towards the jail under a police guard, were attacked. The prisoners were set free and police was belaboured. The jail police line was looted and set on fire. The mare of the Inspector of Police was also carried away. An attempt was made to cut off the telephone wire which was ultimately accomplished, but not before I had twice conveyed message to His Highness the Maharaja Bahadur. It was heard that the jail press was set on fire by some one and that the jail staff was running to extinguish it. The prisoners in the jail raised a clamourous noise. The wounded police poured in. The mob advanced slowly but steadily assaulting and throwing stones till it neared the jail enclosure, while some of them broke the outer turnpike. Others forced their entrance in the enclosure, throwing stones all the while. The armed police was made a special target. Their intention seemed to maul them with stones and snatch rifles from their hands. It was feared that the mob may not snatch the rifles and use them against the police and the government officers present there and set free the prisoners. On this,

1. *Ibid.*

the Deputy Superintendent of Police requested me to order to open fire. I said, "No, make use of Lathis". On this, he said it was useless as stones were being thrown from a distance like a hailstorm. Some of their men were already wounded. Thereupon, I consulted Deputy Inspector General of Police who agreed with the Deputy Superintendent of Police. I ordered the Deputy Inspector General of Police to give a warning first which he did. Inspite of the warning the mob did not disperse and continued throwing stones. I gave orders to fire and instructed, pointing downwards, that the fire be directed to the lower portion of the body. It was about 2·15 or 2·30 p.m. The police fired shots in the air first and then a round of buck-shot on the feet and legs of the mob. Two minutes after the stone-throwing stopped, the firing was also stopped. Again after two minutes stone throwing was resorted to with redoubled vigour and again the police fired out as before. The stone throwing ceased and the mob assembled in the open ground near the jail to prepare for the third attack. No fire was opened after this. A large body of the mob retired and gathered near Hari Parbat.[1]

The retiring mob in the rare of Hari Parbat was shortly after, dispersed by the police. It moved but to Maharajagunj via Bahuri Kadal demonstrating and looting the shops enroute. Meanwhile, the people had learnt about the opening of fire in the jail premises and had assembled wherever possible to sympathise with the people and participate in the protest meetings. It got a nation-wide response. Suspicions amongst communities had grown, leading to arson, looting of opposing communities. Maharajagunj, the heart of Srinagar and Vicharnag near Saura, were the worst hit. Right from Nowhatta via Bahurikadal to Maharjagunj in Srinagar, most of the shops of Hindus were looted. P.N. Bazaz in a statement confesses that this discrimination was caused by

1. *Ibid*, p. 5.

the fact that they (Muslims), "had been taught to believe that the government and the Hindus were synonymous terms and that a blow at the latter was a blow aimed at the former."[1] Similarly, it is alleged that volunteers came down to Vicharnag at Saura on the same day in a motor car, ordering to loot just 50 to 60 minutes after the accident in the jail premises. "The behaviour of the mob was more inhuman there than elsewhere. Whatever could not be removed was burnt or destroyed, 'men worth lacs were denuded of everything'. 'Untold atrocities and indescribable outrages on women', were committed there, as stated in government communique".[2]

The following day, the dead were to be buried. The corpses were collected in Jamia Masjid. The people, right from the early morning thronged round the mosque and a large crowd was coming into and going out of the Jamia Masjid. The authorities, however, did not permit all people to accompany the funeral procession. Only fifty men were permitted to accompany the procession after a compromise between the *Mir Waiz* and the authorities.

On 15th July 1931, there was another accident at Nawab Bazar in which it is reported that there was a clash between the troops and the mob. Some were reported to be dead. There was another clash between army and the people near Zanana Hospital at Rainawari on 16th July. The 17th July, being a Friday, Hartal was observed throughout the State in protest of what had happened during the preceding days. Also, a Gujjar boy was shot at Badami Bagh, in which he received wounds.

The series of events carried away many precious lives. The official sources put the total number of casualties at 12 dead and about 30 men wounded, sixteen wounded only by gun-shot and the rest received injuries in the stampede.[3] The unofficial sources rate it higher than this and put it at eighteen dead.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid*, p. 7.

However, in the series of events, either minor or major, from 13th July 1931 till 1934, unofficial sources put the deaths at 108.[1]

The movement, however perturbed and disturbed the Maharaja and his administration. The leaders were arrested, but pressure, both internal and external, mounted and Muslim representatives and the Maharaja reached a compromise. The main features of the compromise were :—

1. The agitation shall cease and no preaching in mosques or sacred places shall be encouraged.
2. The people shall not act in any way contrary to peaceful life till a negotiated settlement between the Maharaja and the people could be reached.
3. All political prisoners shall be released immediately after the enforcement of the accord.
4. All cases in the courts of law with regard to political prisoners, shall remain suspended till further orders.[2]

This accord did not last long. There were protests internal and external through which the accord was rejected. The leaders had already been arrested, leading once amongst them were Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Gowhar Rahman, Mistri Mohammad Yaqoob, Choudhry Abbas, Molvi Abdul Rahim, and Ghulam Nabi Gilkar. Some were released after the accord but as soon as the accord was publicly rejected at Jamia Masjid, many leaders were re-arrested and many fresh ones were put behind the bars.

The political abnormalcy persisted, leading to the rise of a solid, confident and united nation, meaning to act in some way. The 24th September was chosen to be the greatest of the occasion for the people in Srinagar to show their strength. This day, people moved in the streets, with a crude weapon in their hands to fight out the despotic rule whenever commanded by their leaders. 'Narcho', a crude weapon, handled by many

1. Rashid Taseer, *Tareekhi-Huriat-i-Kashmir*, (Urdu) Hafiz Publications, Srinagar, V. I., pp. 104, 389-401.
2. *Alfazal*, (Urdu) Daily, Lahore, 3rd September, 1931.

platoons of the people, was shown to testify that the nation was bent to fight to the last. The wisdom prevailed on the Maharaja to order its army and police to remain in barracks on the day. No communal tension appeared, no Hindu girl or woman was dishonoured. There was a solid nation against a crumbled administration of the Maharaja. The reactionaries were frustrated, they did not get dividends for what they had planned at Vicharnag and Maharajagunj and the movement was absolutely within the hands of progressives. P.N. Bazaz, therefore, had to confess, "Even though misguided by the bourgeoisie, the Muslim fighters for freedom instinctively followed the age-old tradition of their noble culture. Evidently, the masses had not lost sight of the goal... It was protest simultaneously against unwanted, tyrannical and despotic rule as against the selfish, bourgeosie leadership."[1] The later events had convinced P. N. Bazaz that the movement was in the hands of progressive leadership, though earlier in his statement before the Enquiry Commission he labelled the leadership of the rebellion on the 13th July 1931, as '*Goondas*' and asked, "who provoked, encouraged or even led the '*Goondas*' and the *Badmashes*," and pleaded that "*Goondas*" should not be allowed to thrive.[2] *Narcho* platoon was, therefore, a death knell to all reactionaries and the Maharaja. It was a show of strength, for not only *Narcho* was handled but even guns and rifles were demonstrated.

The '*Narcho*' demonstration was a hit to the Maharaja. Guided by wisdom, he ordered some representatives to wait upon him. The representatives were frustrated on account of the behaviour of the Maharaja. They returned, dispersed the crowd and finally promised the people to convey to them further programmes. The Maharaja, followed the day, with the demonstration of his armed—might. All wings of the army, cavalry, horsemen, and the like marched through the streets of Srinagar. Above all the Maharaja clamped 19-L Ordinance on the people so that no more rebellions could be

1. P.N. Bazaz, *The Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, Pamposh Publications, Delhi, p. 158.

2. Written statement, n. 4, p. 68.

possible. This Ordinance was in essence the proclamation of martial law. The nights in Srinagar remained under curfew and days were subjected to the tyranny of enmasse arrests. The people were whipped and women were molested because army and police had been given a free hand in dealing with the situation.

This tyranny, however, did not deter people from demanding their rights. During November, the Muslims from Jammu, demanded redressal of their grievances. An ultimatum was thrown to the Maharaja that the demands of the Muslims should be accepted within twenty-four hours. As a consequence all leaders from Jammu were arrested and horror and terror prevailed all over the province. Mufti Zaiuddin, a leading personality of Poonch was arrested. The reaction to his arrest was strong. The arrest provoked mass protests from all big villages, towns, cities of both the provinces. The people had unitedly stood against not only arrests but against the L-19.

During this period, the leadership in Kashmir had come to the standard of the most advanced and resolute section of the masses and theoretically, they had over the great mass the advantage of clearly understanding the lines of future march, the conditions, and the ultimate general resolute of the movement in terms of Karl Marx.[1] As a consequence resolute masses had organized themselves into a party named as "All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference". It was geared into action in 1932 in an organized manner. However, the first meeting of the party was held in Srinagar under the presidency of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1933.

The Constitution of the party, in addition to the provisions for the office bearers, general council, working committee and related matters, provided also the rules for the membership of party. The membership was not open to any particular community.[2] However, the association aimed at the organized efforts to struggle for securing political, moral, educational,

1. Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*.
2. Article V of Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Conference Constitution, Pratap Steam Press, Srinagar.

cultural, economic and social uplift of Muslims.[1] This was, thus, construed to be communal organization. The apprehensions of the non-Muslims were that the organization was directed against them and the Maharaja. This contention is falsified by later events as well as by the fact that the Muslim Conference formed a committee, at the very inception of the organization, to seek the ways on which non-Muslims could participate and associate themselves with the organization so that they could help further the movement for freedom of people. The committee consisted of Mr. Sadduddin Shawl, Choudhry Ghulam Abbas, Kh. Ghulam Ahmad Ashai, Aga Syed Hussain Shah, Jalali Sahib, Molvi Abdullah Vakil, Peer Hissamuddin, Kh. Ghulam Ahmad Bhat, Mian Ahmad Yar, Molvi Mohammad Hussain, Munshi Abdul Aziz and Abdul Majid Qureshi. The terms of reference to the committee were to seek the plans for the participation of non-Muslims in the organization, to put forth their grievances against the government and the ways how Muslim Conference could help in their redressal. The differences between the organization and the community were also to be thrushed out. The committee, however, could not function unilaterally because non-Muslims did not participate in the deliberations.[2]

With the establishment of the Muslim Conference, reactionaries mustered courage and emerged to thwart the movement and the Maharaja backing them up, had by 1933, divided the Muslim conferencites, resulting in another political party known as "Azad Muslim Conference". This group was led by Mir Waiz and some of his intimate Molvis. The two groups were many a time motivated to hurl stones, firespots and other weapons on each other. This gave rise to "Azad Volunteer Corpse" and other secret para military organizations which could at time lead people to open rebellion. Thus, the progressive forces rebutted every move of the reactionaries by preventive and offensive measures. The movement flourished and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah emerged as the undisputed leader.

1. *Ibid*, article II.
2. Rashid Taseer, n. 18, p. 268.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, a split personality in the politics of Kashmir, remains undoubtedly, with all his failings, a true socialist and secular in his political history. The socialist and secular tendencies were mature with him in 1931, and are established, and testified by 1975. He proclaimed in 1933, that the Muslim Conference was not a communal organization. Falsifying the opposition and reactionary propaganda, he said that most of the workers of the Conference believed in secular and non-communal concepts[1]. The party was national in essence and socialist in character for it desired to bring a change in the character of economy. Sheikh Abdullah was pained to see the people in the drudgery of slavery, and desired to get them out of it. In the Conference at Mirpur, Sheikh reiterated that the people's rights stood violated, infringed and it harmed all communities—Muslims had not been harmed more than the non-Muslims. He pleaded that Muslim Conference was an achievement and stood for the interests of all sections and communities of the people. He advocated that the right to ownership of land, right to forest concessions, abolition of cess and taxes on barren lands, freedom of press, platform and associations are such rights which are not meant for the benefit of any community but for all the people.[2]

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, in an address before workers of his party in 1935 remarked, "My struggle is aimed at the freedom of my country. We must be above the petty and ordinary communal feelings and work for the welfare of the people. I appeal to my Hindu brethren, not to be guided by doubts and suspicions. I assure them that in the event, they fight shoulder to shoulder with us, they will in no way lose their rights".[3] Even at the time of the very inception of the movement, the leaders of the nation had sworn in at Khanaqahi-Mualla, to struggle together, sacrificing together

1. S.M. Abdullah, An Address before General Council of Muslim, Conference at Mirpur 1933, p. 20.

2. *Ibid.*

3. S.M. Abdullah, Address before II Conference of the Organization, 1935.

without being guided by communal sentiments. They had resolved that the struggle they initiated, shall strive to keep the movement, clean from communal seeds.[1]

The Muslim Conference, well organised, embedded in the hearts of the people, aimed at the independence of the State through a responsible government or democratic institutions. To further its programme, therefore, on 8th May 1936, the party observed a "Responsible Government Day". The basic demand since 1931, the day was solemnly observed everywhere in the State. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, while appealing for the celebration of the 'Day', appealed to non-Muslims, in particular, to participate in it. The appeal had a far-reaching effect. For, at many places, notably Srinagar, Poonch, Jammu, all public meetings were presided over by either Hindus or Sikhs. The Principal speakers also belonged to minority communities.[2] Later, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, emphasising the need of Responsible government, said in his presidential address to the sixth annual session of the Muslim Conference on 26th March, 1938 :

> "Like us the large majority of Hindus and Sikhs in the State have immensely suffered at the hands of the irresponsible government. They are also steeped in deep ignorance, have to pay large taxes and are in debt and starvation. Establishment of responsible government is as much a necessity for them as for us. Sooner or later, these people are bound to join our ranks. No amount of propaganda can keep them away from us."

Enquiry Commission

The awoved policy of the Muslim Conference, therefore, was non-communal but unfortunately immediately after the outbreak of disturbances on 13th July 1931, most of the non-Muslims condemned it as communal organization. The

1. *Eslah*, Srinagar Daily, 21st December, 1934.
2. Bazaz, n. 20, p. 167.

rebellion, was not of anti-government for them alone but against non-Muslims which included Maharaja as well. These apprehensions and other aspects were focussed before the "Riots Enquiry Commission". The Commission was appointed under a proclamation of the Maharaja immediately after the disturbances outside the jail and other places on 13th July 1931. The terms of reference being the causes that led to rebellion and further to examine the grievances of the Muslims and to find, suggest the ways for the redressal of these grievances. The Commission was headed by the Chief Justice of High Court, Barjor Dalal.

Many aspects of the rebellion and reflections on the terms of reference, were presented by variety of men, before the Commission. The variety of men included police and army officers, judicial officers, Intelligence Department, lawyers, professors, journalists, government employees, businessmen and many others. The government officers like, District Magistrates, D.I.G. Police, Brigadier, Home Minister and Intelligence Inspector mostly describe the events that took place on 13th July 1931. They very little, if at all, comment on the causes and the remedies for the same. However, many sympathisers, comment and provide the causes and the remedies for the 'Lèse Majestè'.

Some people believed the rebellion to be the cause of a planned intrigue either by the British imperialists, the communists and some attributed it to inflammatory speeches delivered by the leaders of the movement. The intrigue is also attributed to the political minister of the time, Mr. Wakefield. The Hindus of Vicharnag contended before the Commission that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah aroused the feelings of the people by disclosing to them that Mr. Wakefield, an important minister of the State and the right hand man of His Highness, was at their back in this political crisis. As a consequence, leadership used to give out to the public that non-Mohammadans will hold all responsible posts in the government.[1] The reason for which the intrigue was

1. Vicharnag Hindus, n. 4, p. 147.

attributed to Britishers was that His Highness had talked of nationalism at round table conference in London and hence Wakefield was an instrument to overthrow him to be replaced by a responsible government. Some believed the intrigue to have been hetched at the instance of the communists. Before the Commission it was contended by P.N. Bazaz, on behalf of the Sanatan Dharm Youngmen's Association, Srinagar, that the movement was abetted by a communist. He contended that a communist Mr. Subhani by name reached Srinagar, late in 1930, and met Molvi Abdullah Vakil and some youngmen. "Though a communist, not a communalist, his teaching could not but be interpreted by his hearers to mean a plea for a general uprising", he stated.[1] Often, the Commission hears the plea that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, Abdul Samad and Abdul Rahim delivered inflammatory speeches before the public, preparing them for rebellion. It is dubbed that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah said to the people after the arrest of Mr. Abdul Qadeer : "Be prepared to be sacrificed for the sake of poor, and earn a place in heaven". the Governor said before the Commission that the people were instigated to enter the jail premises and if resisted, they should be prepared for any sacrifice. He said, "Selfless sacrifice was highly commented upon with a view to preparing the people for sacrifice".[2]

Many a witness, before the Commission attributed the rebellion to low standards of education and economy of the Muslim community. They contended that while the economic depression was widespread in the world, in the State it was attributable to the negligence and partiality of the government towards the Muslim community. The backwardness in education is attributed to the indifference of the government. In education the Headmaster, Islamia High School, Srinagar gives a brief description of the negligence of the government to flout all recommendations of the All India Mohammadan Educational Conference and that of the recommendations made by Mr. Sharp, Government of India Expert in education

1. P.N. Bazaz, n. 4, p. 59.
2 Raizada Trilok Chand, n. 4, pp. 1-7.

so that the Muslim community could remain educationally backward.[1] P.N. Bazaz, commenting upon the economic conditions in the State, before Commission says, "The general economic level throughout India is low, but so far as the rural conditions go, Kashmir can very favourably compare with any other Indian States."[2]

Many a witness attributed the rebellion to the intransigence of communalists in Kashmir starting with the episode that the Muslims and Hindus in Srinagar were divided on the acceptance of Bala Kak Dhar as the President of His Highness's reception committee, on his return from Europe and end with the happenings at Maharajagunj and Vicharnag. Most of the Pandit witnesses attributed to the communalism which was initiated and caused by the Muslim intelligentia from outside the State. This communalism is attributed to the following factors, (by P.N. Bazaz) :

(1) Hindus were intellectuals and hence Muslims felt jealous of them.
(2) Punjab communal politics crossed its barriers to poison Muslims in Kashmir.
(3) Maharaja's love for Muslims which is evidenced by his participation in Id prayers.
(4) Maharaja did more for the Muslims than even a Muslim Prince could or would do for them—they were encouraged.
(5) Muslims were free to preach disaffection.[3]

The refusal of Bal Kak Dhar, as the Joint representative of Muslims and Hindus to receive Maharaja, resulted in a procession by Hindus with the dead body of a girl, is construed by Mr. Abdullah Vakil as a basis for communalism attached to the movement. To him wrong and false reports with regard to the dead girl, and isolated criminal offence,

1. Pirzada Ghulam Rasool, n. 4, p. 192.
2. Bazaz, n. 4, p. 68.
3. *Ibid.*, n. 4, pp 56-59.

in the newspapers added gravity to the situation, resulting in communalism[1].

Finally, educated unemployed and Muslim representation in the government services is presented as the main factor which led to the disturbances. Pt. P.N. Bazaz, Gwash Lal, B.A., Pirzada Ghulam Rasool and G.A. Mukhtar provide counter claims on the issue. The former two witnesses provide the commission with list of candidates (qualification-wise) who remained unemployed from Pandit community, and Pirzada Ghulam Rasool supplies the data to show that the number of Muslims in service was insignificant[2].

Muslims, however, had boycotted from the Commission of Enquiry, on the plea that the terms of reference for the Commission could not be construed to substitute the damand for responsible government. This is contended before the Commission by the Secretary of Muslim representative who demands the Commission, not to submit the report unilaterally unless some reference is made to the Muslims as well. The Secretary submits, "Unfortunately the Muslim Community has decided to stand aloof and has not educed any evidence so far, but this does not absolve thecom munity from making a strenuous effort to arrive at the truth and get everybody who may be in possession of facts examined by the Committee. In any case, the Committee, if it is to submit an impartial report, must give a patient listening to the version of the other side".[3]

Reaction outside the State

The rebellion and the series of events that followed it, had a sharp reaction outside the State. It was so sharp that not only the Maharaja was disturbed but even the Britishers thought the situation out of control. The media for the reactions were the Dailys of Lahore and of other places.

1. *Ibid*, n. 4, p. 26.
2. Witness Nos. 33, 38, 68, 87, n. 4.
3. Mufti Jalaluddin, n. 4, p. 258.

P.N. Bazaz, commits to these reactions in the following words :

> "An adequate explanation for the recent occurrences, must be sought in the violent propaganda persistently carried on in the Panjab Muslim Press."[1]

The papers in vernacular to sympathise with the rebellion were 'Inqilab', the Kashmiri Muslman, the Kashmiri Mazloom, Hatta Hayo, Alfazal and the Sunrise. The agitation to secure rights for Kashmiris was being vigorously carried on for a number of years by not only the press but by All India Kashmir Muslim Conference, the Simla Kashmiri Muslim Board and the Panjab Labour Board.

These newspapers gave fiery articles and comments to convince the people in the sub-continent and outside it that tyranny perpetuated against the people of Kashmir. Alfazal, the spokesman of Ahmadiyas, wrote about the plight of the Kashmiris and the arrest of the workers and laid down the bear fact that cut throat policy prevailed in Kashmir as well as in Jammu. The prisoners according to it were manhandled and many were tried by Judges and awarded severely. According to reports available to the newspaper, all mosques in Srinagar, Jammu and other places in the State were put under the police custody.[2] The same paper compares the events of 13th July 1931, with that of 'Jalianwala Bagh' and commenting about the happenings in Kashmir. It writes that tyrannies in it make a tale, the example of which is not available in the civilized world. The government of Jammu and Kashmir perpetuated tyranny on naked and helpless Kashmiris. The paper remarked that the world of humanity sheds blood on such events. It had violent attacks on the government and pities the people who demanded their just and equitable rights but were treated like animals. In another issue Kashmiris are praised because they face aggressors

1. Written Statement, n. 4, p. 57.
2. *Alfazal*, Qadian, 29th August, 1931,

valiantly. Commenting on the reactionary press it admits that it slips the truth and gives an example of such a paper which wrote, "None of the Muslim Minister or Muslim civil servant is permitted to enter the Royal palaces". It adds that "Kashmiris are neither afraid of gun nor they run away. They are not prepared to retreat from the demand of their economic and political rights".[1]

The sharp reaction also manifested in the establishment of an "All India Kashmir Committee", on 25th of July 1931, at fair view of Lahore. The meeting was, in addition to many more, attended by Dr. Sheikh Mohammad Iqbal.[2]

After consultations and discussions about the situation in Kashmir, Mr. Mahmud Ahmad was unanimously selected president of the Committee and Mr. Abdul Rahim Dar as Secretary. It was further resolved in the meeting—

(1) To celebrate a 'Kashmir Day' throughout India.
(2) To convince the government of England to help granting more rights to the people. To grant them rights like "right to freedom", of thought, religion, right to property including the ownership of land.
(3) To apprise all people about the conditions in Kashmir.
(4) To write a book in English to communicate to the Europeans the real situation in Kashmir.
(5) To ask the government of England to interpret the treaty of Amritsar.
(6) To keep the Viceroy of India and the political agent in Kashmir abreast with the real situation in J & K.
(7) That in the absence of any steps taken towards the improvement in the situation, they shall convene an All India Kashmir Conference at Sialkote.
(8) To suppress the tendency of the government to create a communal tension by enacting the laws to permit the use of Pork and not the cow flesh.

1. *Ibid*, 28th July 1931, p. 4.
2. Included were : Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Kh. Hassan Nizami, Nawab of Kanjpora, Khan Bahadur Sheikh Rehim, Syed Muhsan Shah, Moulvi Mohd. Ismail, Maulvi Noorulhaq, Syed Habibullah, Representatives from Frontier and J. & K.

(9) To act according to the programme.[1]

The Government of Jammu and Kashmir was all oppressive in the event of a belief that the majority of the people were not loyal to the Maharaja. It, therefore, opened an all out war against the masses. In a statement, the Secretary, All India Kashmir Committee analysing the situation refers to the following facts :

(1) Appointment of Hari Krishen Koul is disdained, as the Prime Minister of Kashmir on being a communal type of man.
(2) No change occurred in the situation since the first appeal of the All India Kashmir Committee was made.
(3) Muslim press must take serious note about the situation in Kashmir.
(4) A Kashmir Day should be celebrated on 14th August, 1931.
(5) The President and the Secretary of All India Kashmir Committee desire to place everything before the Commission of Enquiry, if Government of Kashmir appoints one.

Commenting upon the deteriorating conditions of Kashmir, the Alfazal says that the Government of J & K was not inclined to settle the dispute with the people of Kashmir and that she was not prepared to grant them rights. This resulted in the perpetration of tyranny and to effect it, Hari Krishen Koul was appointed as Prime Minister and the powers of Mr. Wakefield were stripped off.[2]

As a consequence, Kashmir Day was celebrated on 14th August, 1931. There was complete Hartal in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The whole of Srinagar was under Army control and curfew was clamped in all big cities and

1. *Alfazal*, 30th July, 1931.
2. *Ibid*, Ist August 1931, p. 3,

towns of the State. At the call of All India Kashmir Committee, the day was celebrated in almost all cities of India.[1] Speaking on this day, Sir Dr. Sheikh Mohammad Iqbal, reiterated that the movement in Kashmir was neither communal nor directed against a person but it was to seek rights for the people. In his own words he said :

> "To say that present unrest in Kashmir is a communal strife is baseless, I declare that it is neither Hindu-Muslim rift nor a communal strife to overthrow a Hindu Maharaja—when some Kashmiri Pandits came to me to present some grievances to the Maharaja, I exhorted them to go back to Kashmir, unite with muslims and present their demands to the Maharaja jointly."[2]

While giving the details of the Kashmir Day as observed in Srinagar the paper Alfazal, notes a poem in Urdu which was recited in the Jamia Mosque on the day. The poem created an emotional havoc and government looked helpless. A couplet from the poem is translated as :—

> "The beautiful flowers of the beautiful garden faultlessly,
> Today some tyrant has prone them in the dust,
> Innocent death shall some day bring fruit,
> God has bestowed for the heavens."

Alfazal is aggrieved to note the happenings in Kashmir. It notes that many leaders were arrested day after day and Rajputs were being poisoned against Kashmiris, communalism was being propagated not only to disintegrate the Kashmiris but also to divide Muslims in particular. Amendment to the Land Act was construed to be against the interests of

1. Deuband, Jehlum, Gurdaspur, Lahore, Bhagalpur, Sargodha, Rangoon, Calcutta, Jang, Shahjahanpur, Bombay, Lailpur, Gurdhashanker, Dera Gazi Khan, Jaranwala, Kalicut, Mussoori, Arawal, Rangpur, Bengal, Cuttak, Balaspur, Devlali, Mansara, Karnal, Pial (Patiala), Shahabad, Panipat, Kalanoor, Bhani, Khaniwan, Hoshiarpur and Talwandi.

2. *Alfazal*, 20th August 1931, p. 8

Muslims. Leaders were being tried in courts not as political prisoners but as criminals. The people were not permitted to go to mosques to offer prayers. Accordingly, there was a strong grip of the army over the whole of the State. All arrested were manhandled.[1]

The condition of the people inside the State stimulated not only the Indian public opinion but also led to a movement through Ahrars in Panjab. Ahrars, a revolutionary group in northern India in those days led by a revolutionary Ahrar, believed and labelled Kashmir Committee as a reactionary party, designed influenced and motivated by Quadianese, in collaboration with the British imperialists, to pressurize the Maharaja to submit to them and lease out Gilgit to the British. They criticized the Committee and declared that they had no sympathy with the people of Kashmir. Ahrars, therefore, decided to import revolution to the State in sending volunteers inside the State. The party is prophetic while commenting on the movement in Kashmir when they say "The movement was not the result of a Hindu Maharaja ruling a muslim majority but it was the protest against the oppressive designs which every Bourgeoise oriented society perpetuates against its poor class."[2]

Ahrar, therefore, connected the movement in Kashmir with that of Indian Independence movement and laid down guidelines for all in the points indicated below :—

(1) The people of the State and the Indians fight together to secure freedom from British.
(2) No peace could be possible to be secured in Kashmir without granting responsible government to the people in the State.
(3) The sympathy shown to the Kashmiris by the British is not in any way conducive to the people.
(4) The people of Kashmir were more conscious politically than its mature leaders—this was conveyed to

1. *Ibid*, 27th August, 1931.
2. Kh. Mohammad Sadiq, *Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Ki Wazarat Ka Zawa Ka Asbab*, pp. 18—20.

> Hari Krishen Koul the then Prime Minister of Kashmir by Ahrar, with the remark that the movement was not directed against the Hindu Maharaja but to save the nation from its economic degradation.

Whether Sheikh Abdullah agreed or disagreed with the interpretations but he refuted the charge that the Kashmiri leaders were amateur to shoulder the responsibility of the government. *Ahrars*, therefore, in consonance with their policy started a civil disobedience movement. Thousands of volunteers were arrested, Maharaja could not contain borders, bowed before the British, banned the movement of *Ahrars* in the Panjab, saved the Maharaja on the condition that Gilgit be leased out to the British. The game was over.[1]

Constitutional Reforms

The series of events in Kashmir, since 13th July, 1931, and the sharp reactions outside the State had prompted and compelled Maharaja to initiate constitutional reforms from the very outset. The first to appease the rebellious elements was the appointment of the "Riots Enquiry Commission", headed by Barjor Dalal, the Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir High Court, to look into the causes that led to the rebellion on 13th July 1931. The additional term of reference demanded the Commission to recommend the ways and means to overcome such adverse conditions. The Commission, however, was boycotted by the Muslim community and as a consequence it failed to produce any cohesive results. The Commission's failure, as such, resulted in the appointment of 'Middleton Commission'.

The Middleton Commission had two chief terms of reference. First, it was to examine all kinds of grievances of the Muslim community and suggest remedies ; and secondly, it had to enquire into some accidents that had occurred especially the death of a woman at Maisuma Srinagar when a woman procession was shot at on 24th September 1931.

1. *Ibid.*

Middleton was a reactionary and justified all the activities of the government. In his report, he justified firing at Maisuma, Shopian, Jamia Masjid and Islamabad. He even went to the extent of recommending and justifying corporal punishments to suppress the people. The result being that neither the people nor even the government took his recommendations seriously.

His Highness, therefore, through a royal proclamation, appointed another Commission headed by an English Officer B.J. Galancy of the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India. He was to be assisted by four non-official members, one Muslim and one non-Muslim from each province of the State. The function of the Commission was to enquire into and report on the various complaints of different communities, which the Commission would receive through memorials. It is pertinent to record here that the government had asked for memorials that could be placed before it. Reactionary Hindus boycotted the Commission, who had by then collected under the "Yuvak Sabha". Muslims did not get anything out of the recommendations of the Commission but "reactionaries only got a bad name for their behaviour. Unhappily Lok Nath Sharma surrendered before these powerful forces of reaction but P.N. Bazaz would not yield."[1]

The report of the Commission was published in 1932. It accepted the demands of Muslims in employment, abolition of grazing tax, Beggar Law, proprietary rights in land and recommended industrialisation. The Committee in more specific ways recommended as under :—

(1) Religious places that had passed into the hands of the government, were to be restored to the community which was able to substantiate its claims on them.

(2) Recruitment of different communities in government service was assured by reducing qualification bar to a minimum so that less advanced communities would secure an adequate share.

1. P.N. Bazaz, n. 20, p. 161.

(3) Grant of proprietary rights accompanied by controlling legislation in regard to lands, of which the ownership was held by the State.

In the last case His Highness granted the proprietary rights to the Zamindars and also waived the condition of payment through 'Nazrana'. The government in case of abolition of Nazrana, claimed to have lost in money value an amount of over Rs. 20 lakhs. This concession according to Government sources, was extended to villages transferred to the State, from His Highness's private department.[1]

The government also claimed another step towards the freedom of the people by removing restrictions that existed on the freedom of press and platform. The press laws, according to the government sources, were brought in line with those of British India. The government also claimed existence of sixty newspapers and periodicals during this period in the State.[2]

After the enquiry into the grievances had been completed, reforms conference, with Mr. Galancy as president was held to give effect to His Highness's so called desire to associate his people with the administration of the State. It was rather the desire for continuation of the regime. The result of the recommendations made by the conference and the Franchise Commission under the chairmanship of Sir Barjor Dalal, was the establishment in 1934 of the J. & K. Praja Sabha. It is surprising to note that it gave the right of vote to about six per cent of the population only. How could this minority representing legislature satisfy the majority community ?

However, the Constitution then introduced, under which Praja Sabha was established, permitted the asking of questions, moving of resolutions, introduction of Bills and also the discussion on State budget. The Sabha consisted of seventy-five members, sixty of whom were non-officials including 33 elected members. His Highness, the Maharaja was compelled

1. *A Handbook*, n. 2, p. 34.
2. *Ibid*, p. 35.

by circumstances to sanction further advance by a proclamation issued on 11th of February 1939 towards the representation. The main features of the new constitutional advance were that :—

(1) The elected element in the House of seventy-five members was raised from 33 to 40.
(2) The Sabha was given the right of electing a deputy president from amongst its non-official members.
(3) The provision was made for the appointment of non-official members of Under Secretaries to work with His Highness's ministers and ensure closer association between the government on the one hand and the members of the Praja Sabha and constituencies on the other.
(4) The Praja Sabha was given the right to vote, except with regard to a few non-votable items, on the demands made by government for budget appropriations.
(5) The Sabha was given the right of passing all legislations pertaining to taxes, and distinguished fees from penalties.[1]

The constitutional scheme had reserved initially the inherent legislative, executive, judicial powers to the State and his government, the Council of Ministers, comprising the Prime Minister and such other ministers of State as His Highness might appoint, was invested with the power of superintendence and direction, and control of civil administration and government, of the State. The provision was also made for the appointment of an Advocate General. The legislature consisted of His Highness and the Praja Sabha. The President of the Sabha was to be appointed by His Highness. The members of the Council of Ministers were ex-officio members of the Praja Sabha. Out of seventy-five members (excluding the President) of the Praja Sabha, forty were elected and thirty-three nominated. Eight amongst nominated were

1. *Ibid*, p. 35.

officials. The Sabha had the power to make laws for the whole of the State or any part thereof, and for all the subjects of His Highness. However, the principal matters reserved from the purview of the Praja Sabha were :—

(*a*) His Highness or any member of the Royal family.
(*b*) Relations, treaties, conventions or agreement between the State and His Majesty the King Emperor of India or the Government of India or with the foreign powers or the government of any State in India.
(*c*) Matters of frontier policy.
(*d*) Organizations, discipline and control of the State army.
(*e*) The provisions of the Constitution Act and the rules made thereunder.

The inception of the Praja Sabha or other constitutional reforms did neither satisfy the leadership nor the masses. Therefore, the Muslim Conference suggested to the Maharaja by 1937 that the experience from the history of the legislature had provided them with enough proof that the Constitution governing the State was not satisfactory. It as such suggested to the Maharaja through a resolution of the Conference to amend the Constitution in the same spirit as that of the Indian Constitution so that the economic requirements of the State were fully met.[1]

New Socialist Style of the Conference

The emphasis, both at the organizational and mass levels on economic and political freedom, led to the emergence of a strong opinion in favour of a joint venture and a dog fight against the despotic rule. The people, including the non-Muslims, had by then, begun to rally themselves around the Muslim Conference. The Muslim Conference, on its part, started a campaign for rights for all communities. However,

1. *Ibid.*

before they could hazard a joint venture, it was necessary to unite the Muslim and the non-Muslim leadership on the basis of progressive ideas. To this end, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had indicated in 1938 that every Kashmiri whether a Hindu, a Musalman, a Sikh or belonging to any language area should fight together, if he desires to secure political and economic freedom.[1]

The causes that led to the rebellion in 1931, were mostly of economic and political nature, the series of events that followed it aimed at the furtherance of the struggle for economic and political freedom. Constitutional reforms tried to find solution to the problems failed, and the organization (through movement) remoulded itself to the same end and the latter events testified that the movement was based on progressive ideas. Therefore, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was encouraged to seek the cooperation of non-Muslims belonging to the lower stratum who would participate in the struggle for political and economic freedom. He was confident that in course of time the non-Muslim sections of the masses shall bring benefits to all communities equally.[2]

Even from the platform of the Muslim Conference, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, not only invited non-Muslims to cooperate with the movement, but also struggled to keep the party above the petty communalism. In his presidential address to the sixth annual session of the Muslim Conference on the 26th March 1938, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah observed :—

> "The main problem, therefore, now with us is to organize joint action and a united front against the forces that stand in our way in the achievement of our goal. This will require re-christening our organization as a non-communal political body and introducing certain amendments in its Constitution and its rules."

1. S.M. Abdullah, An Address before General Council of the Muslim Conference, 1938, p. 6.
2. *Ibid*, p. 17.

He further added :—

> "I reiterate today that I have said so often. Firstly, we must end communalism by ceasing to think in terms of Muslims and non-Muslims when discussing our political problems. Secondly, there must be universal sufferage on the basis of joint electorates. Without these two, democracy is lifeless."[1]

The time was ripe to infuse fresh blood into the organization and inspire so many people with socialist convictions associated with the organization. Amongst them were, Kh. Umar Bhat, Kh. Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq, Pt. Rughnath Vishnavi, Mr. Madan Lal, Vir Prakash, Seth Kishori Lal, Kh. Ali Mohammad Bhat, Kh. Ghulam Mohiuddin Qara, Faiz Ahmad Paracha, Badri Nath Koul, Prem Nath Jalali, Dr. Niranjan Nath Raina, Prem Nath Bazaz and two outsiders—Mr. Bedi and Dr. Ashraf. Some of them organized 'Mazdoor Sabha' purely a Socialist organization and some 'Kashmir National Congress' (not affiliated to Indian National Congress) headed by Kh. Umar Bhat also a progressive organization. Later, these organizations merged with the National organization of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, therefore, desired the amendment of the Constitution of the Muslim Conference to suit the situations and his convictions. He might be a musalman but his economic creed is socialism. In an address before the Conference he said :—

> "No doubt, the question that Muslim Conference could not grant membership to non-Muslims is a serious question. It hinders the actual participation of non-Muslims in our movement. What mode of action should be accepted to foster a reconciliation is to be found out. I accept the gravity of the problem and I am sure you agree that muslims

1. *Ibid*, p. 17.

and non-Muslims must have a common place wherein they could work together. Once we bring all communities together, the reactionaries will still try to create hurdles in the way; we will have to determine to face it with all courage and fortitude."[1]

In the very first address before the Muslim Conference the Sheikh emphasised the need of reorienting the economic policy of the organization and suggested to the government of the time to settle all economic problems of every section of the society on the basis of abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.

Towards this goal, the reorientation of the organization, both in its spheres of activities and the nomenclature was necessary so that all sections of society could muster energies to achieve political independence and economic self-sufficiency. Therefore, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah finally placed before the working committee of the Muslim Conference, a resolution embodying his views on 28th June 1938. There was some opposition from some quarters but after heated discussions for about fifty-two hours, the committee adopted the resolution which said :

"Whereas in the opinion of the working committee, the time has now come when all progressive forces in the country should be rallied under one banner to fight for the achievement of responsible government. The working committee recommends to the General Council that in the forthcoming session of the Conference the name and the constitution of the organization be so altered and amended that all such people who desire to participate in this political struggle may easily become members of the Conference irrespective of their caste, creed or religion."[2]

1. *Ibid.*
2. P. N. Bazaz, n. 20, p. 169.

The recommendations were placed before the General Council of the Muslim Conference. Before it could be adopted, it was decided to be placed before a committee of experts, with Mr. G. M. Sadiq as its chairman. Mr. Sadiq by conviction a socialist, born with a silver spoon in his mouth, could not help but educate the party to work on progressive lines. The amended draft of the constitution of the Muslim Conference with a note from the committee of experts headed by Mr. G. M. Sadiq, was placed before the General Assembly of the Conference on 10th June 1939. The Conference adopted the amended draft of the constitution and was placed before a special Conference of the organization on 11th June, 1939.

The new constitution was adopted after heated discussion. Every clause of the constitution was read and then dropped. There were clear indications both inherent to the amended constitution and in the behaviour of the conferencites that could be termed socialist tendencies for emphasising economic independence. The moves of the reactionaries and the ruling elite were frustrated. After the release of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his non-Muslim colleagues in 1938, all sections of the society were convinced about the progressive designs of the Muslim Conferencites. The grand conference of the Muslim Conference in Shahi Masjid in Srinagar, representing all sections of society, had devastating effect on all communalists. In this conference Maulana Mohammad Saiyad Masoodi said :

> "Under changing situations, circumstances and on account of the exigencies of time, we must shed all narrow-mindedness and rise above the cheap level of communalism and struggle for the political and economic freedom. The struggle should not be fought for any community or section of a community but for all poverty-stricken and oppressed masses of the State. We must fight for the welfare of the peasantry, labour class. Consequently, it is necessary to show to the world that we are a progres-

sive nation and hence convert the Muslim Conference into the National Conference."[1]

In reply, to the statement made by the Secretary, Mr. Choudhry Ghulam Abbas, a champion of the Muslim Conference, recorded the resolution with the remark :

"Our bodies have fattened under the name of Muslim Conference, the gown which we had, is worn out and shortened. We must, therefore, cut it into pieces and tomorrow the people who come to you with the slogan that Islam is in danger shall be the traitors of the nation."[2]

The series of events in the State from 1931 to 1939, with the exception of very trivial incidents, mark the time for a united effort, for a definite goal of political and economic independence which the leaders believed to achieve through revolution resulting in socialist pattern of society which later events and ideas testify.

1. G. M. D. Hamadani, *Kashmir Kahan se Kahan* (Urdu), Broca's Press, Srinagar, 23 (p).
2. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER THREE

Socialist Dimension of National Conference

The conversion of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference by amending the constitution of the former organization, envisaged consolidation and unity in all the ranks of the workers and the labourers. It made small traders, shopkeepers, handicraftsmen, peasants, pandits, Sikhs and Muslims gradually shrink into a class, enabling themselves to be guided and led by the National Conference. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah gave a call for this unity at Islamabad when he said, "When we say that there is need for the unity of Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims, we mean such of them as are oppressed and exploited. For, we know that the exploited might profess any religion, he can never pity the oppressed unless he is removed".[1]

Further, this change in the nomenclature of the organization and in its aims and objectives led all intellectuals, the

1. S.M. Abdullah, *An Address, National Conference Annual Conference*, Islamabad, 2nd October, 1939.

educated unemployed, the service class and other workers believe that communalism had no place in the freedom movement and the Kashmiri soil was not fertile for it. There were two reasons : (1) There was a long history of communal harmony, and (2) Muslim politics outside had no worth-while impact in the State. Since recorded time Kashmiris had developed a tolerant and peaceful outlook on religious matters. The two major communities, Muslims and Pandits, had lived in perfect harmony throughout the chequered history of Kashmir.[1]

Kashmiri Muslims, though a majority community, were little affected by the Muslims outside the State ; and, hence they developed their own traditions.[2]

Also, the establishment of a socialist state in Russia had a profound impact on the leadership of the Conference. The emphasis on economic justice—through control over means of production by the state—had inspired the thinking of the National Conference deliberations from time to time. The party literature made frequent references to it. It was in view of the growing influence of the Bolshevik Revolution that the Political Resident in Kashmir wrote to the Maharaja of Kashmir as early in 1919 asking him to be vigilant on the northern borders so that Bolshevic literature does not cross into the State through Russian agencies.[3] As a consequence Gilgit[4] was taken over by the British India Government twice under its direct control uptill 1947. The socialist urge of an incipient movement were also bred by the literature and influence of Socialist Russia. There is no doubt that some sort of literature had entered the valley and other parts of the State prior to 1931 from Russia through Gilgit on the northern border of the State.

1. P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir*, Metropolitan Book Co., Delhi, p. 725.
2. *Ibid*, p. 725.
3. Kh. Ghulam Mohammad, *Sheikh Abdullah Ki Wazarat Ke Zawal ke Asbab* (Urdu), Lahore Press, Delhi, p. 14.
4. The hilly area meeting the borders of USSR.

As a consequence of the Bolshevik Revolution, progressive elements had expanded in the National Conference by :939. The hierarchy of the organization had men with strong socialist convictions. Some of the people associated with the Sheikh—including G. M. Sadiq, Pt. Rughnath Vashnavi, Madan Lal, Ali Mohammad, Ved Prakash, Kishori Lal, Faiz Ahmad Paracha, Dina Nath Hanjora, Ghulam Nabi, Mohammad Jamal, Prem Nath Dhar and Dwarka Nath Kachroo—were known for their socialist leanings. Many of them had been associated with a separate political party, called the "Kashmir National Congress". Though inspired by the Indian National Congress, this party was not affiliated to it. This facilitated the prompt amalgamation of the Kashmir National Congress with the National Conference. Besides, many more socialists, who were individually seeking to join some suitable political party, were attracted by the National Conference in the forties. Among such prominent individuals were Dr. Niranjan Nath Raina, Peer Abdul Aziz, D. P. Dhar, Mohammad Yousuf Dar, Peer Giasuddin, Ghulam Rasool Renzoo, Moti Lal Misri, Janki Nath Zutshi, Jia Lal Temeeri, Jia Lal Kilam, Mohammad Anwar Akhon, Ali Mohd. Shah, Bahauddin Zahid, Noor Mohd. Sheikh, Prem Nath Jalali, Hridey Nath Durani, Sardar Darbar Singh, Ram Payara Saraf, Kishen Dev Sethi, Moti Ram Bagda, Badri Nath Nishat and Mohamad Lone. Miss Mahmuda Ahmad Ali Shah was the first lady to associate herself with the revolutionaries. Though she did not attend the meetings of the National Conference, yet she was one of the volunteers designated to blast the bridge at Baramullah, a task which was not accomplished. Raja Mohammad Akbar Khan too was the member of the National Conference and was jailed twice as the lieutenant of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. There was another known socialist, Comrade Trilok Chand. Another worker, Jai Prakash—whose pen-name was Baghi—is termed by a paper as a rebel[1] who stood the tyrannies of the despotic rule.

1. Sach, a weekly, 9th February, 1945.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's attitude also contributed to the secular and socialist stances of the organization, personally, he has a firm commitment to socialism, secularism and democracy. References to this attitude are available throughout his political career and behaviour. Regarding socialism his convictions are beyond doubt. To him the economic aspect is very important. At the annual conference of the National Conference at Islamabad—stressing the need of unity among all workers, peasants, artisans and other wage-earners—he remarked that unity must stand for economic equality on the principles of socialism and a progressive outlook.[1] Secularism is his passion, once he remarked, "If I regard anything a sin in this world, it is communalism. I never bowed before Muslim communalism ; so shall not my head bow before Hindu communalism".[2] In his presidential address at the sixth session of the Muslim Conference, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah remarked, "Like us the large majority of Hindus and Sikhs in the State have immensely suffered at the hands of the irresponsible government. They are also steeped in deep ignorance, have to pay large taxes, are in debts and starving. Establishing of responsible government is as much a necessity for them as for us".[3]

Constitution

In view of the progressive tendencies of its leadership, the Muslim Conference established as early as 1932, was found incapable of coping up with the political objectives of the organization and, therefore, had to be named the National Conference instead. The basic constitution of this organization was drafted in a manner that would vouchsafe its commitment to socialism. The first step towards this commitment was the meeting, at Shahi Mosque in Srinagar,

1. S.M. Abdullah, *An Address*, National Conference annual session, 2nd October, 1939.
2. *Pagam-i-Haq* (Urdu), J&K Govt. Information Department, p. 1.
3. S.M. Abdullah, *An Address*, Muslim Conference, Sixth annual session, 26th March, 1938,

which was represented by many comrades, non-Muslims and others, in which a devastating resolution for reactionaries was passed. The resolution was moved by Mr. Molvi Mohammad Saeed, the Secretary of the National Conference, which ran as : "Under changing circumstances, and on account of demands from all sections of society, we must shed all narrow-mindedness and come above the cheap level of communalism and struggle for freedom. We must fight for economic justice so that welfare of the peasantry and the working classes is sought".[1]

After 1944 the Constitution was brought up-to-date. The very first article of the amended constitution, spelling out the aims and objectives of the organization, lays down that the party shall endeavour to establish "a democratic government in the State in accordance with the principles of the economic planning envisaged in the Naya Kashmir".[2] In the economic programme of Naya Kashmir state control is envisaged over agriculture, industrial production, distribution of national wealth and state direction for the improvement of education, health, labour, cooperatives and culture.[3]

The very first chapter of the amended constitution deals with the aims and objectives of the organization. It describes the various organs of the National Conference. It prescribes the qualifications for the membership of the organization. The administrative set-up of the organization in Tehsils and districts is also provided for in it. One of the features of the first chapter is that, under article II, it permits labour unions, artisans, associations, student associations and women's associations to affiliate themselves with the National Conference as a political organization. The Chapter envisages a Credentials Commission, consisting of three members from each tehsil, to enquire into the allegations

1. G.M.D. Hamadani, *Kashmir Kahan-se-Kahan* (*Urdu*), President, District National Conference, Srinagar.

2. Article I, *Aieni-Asasi* (Urdu), n.d., All J & K National Conference, New Kashmir Press, Srinagar.

3. Article 50, *Naya Kashmir* (Urdu), All J and K National Conference, Nishat Press, Srinagar.

against members of the National Conference and report against such of the members who act in contravention of the aims and objectives of the organization.

The Constitution defines the territorial jurisdiction—consisting of thirteen districts—the State of Jammu and Kashmir for organizational purposes, each district having a district committee of the National Conference with tehsil committees subordinate to it. The latter are forty-three in number, with Halqa Committees and basic committees below them. The upper hierarchy of the National Conference consisted of two Provincial Committees for Jammu and Kashmir, and above these all was the "*National Conference General Council*".[1]

The constitution lays down method of procedure for democratic elections annually for all the office-bearers of the organization, delegates and the President of the National Conference. The provincial committees were to consist of the delegates elected by the committees just one step lower in hierarchy. The constitution spells out the position and the role of each member of the provincial, district and tehsil committees.[2]

The General Council was the final decision-maker of the National Conference. It was the same Council which had amended the constitution, converting the Muslim Conference into the National Conference. It consisted of the delegates who were elected to represent various areas of the State. A fee of five rupees was payable to the General Secretary of the National Conference, with a letter of credentials from the President of Tehsil National Conference.[3] The office-bearers of the National Conference at the top level consisted of the President, Vice-President, General Secretary and the Treasurer.

The third chapter of the Constitution deals with the Conference sessions—annual, bi-annual or special—convened

1. Articles III and IV, n. 12, pp. 4-8.
2. Articles V to VIII, n. 12, pp. 9-12.
3. Article IX, n. 12, p. 13.

at the behest of the Working Committee. These conferences could be held at any district headquarter or elsewhere in the district, after consulting the district National Conference Committee. A Reception Committee consisting of the district elite of National Conference, was to be constituted to make the arrangements for the conference as scheduled.[1] To convene a special session it was obligatory for the Working Committee to place before the General Council a resolution to that effect. This should have been consented to by two-thirds of the members present in the General Council.[2]

The Working Committee of the National Conference consisted of the President, the Vice-President, the General Secretary and the Treasurer, along with eleven members nominated by the President from amongst the members of the General Council. In the Constitution it was designated as the executive body of the party and its foremost duty was to execute the policies of the General Council. The Working Committee members were thus made responsible to the General Council as per the constitution.[3]

The Constitution further lays down rules pertaining to the financial position of the organization. These rules relate to the revenue of the organization and distribution thereof. The membership fee was to be distributed in accordance with the provisions of the Article XVI of the Constitution.[4] No subordinate committee of the All J & K National Conference could raise any funds except with the permission of the President. Once the funds were raised, these could be distri-

1. Article XII, n. 12, p. 17.
2. Article XIII, n. 12, p. 18.
3. Article XV, n. 12, p. 20.
4. It reads as:
   Basic N.C. Committee—10 per cent
   Halqa N.C. Committee—25 per cent
   Tehsil N.C. Committee—20 per cent
   Provincial N.C. Committee—10 per cent
   All J and K N.C.—20 per cent
   District N.C. Committee—15 per cent.

buted in accordance with the provisions laid down under Article XVI of the Constitution.

Economic planning after the establishment of responsible government envisaged by the Constitution, and it occupies a pivotal position in the Naya Kashmir programme. This emphasises the socialist dimension of the National Conference. Moreover, the membership of the party was extended to all people without any discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, colour, belief or religion. The credentials committee at various levels could recommend dismissal of such of the elements as worked against the avowed principles and the Constitution of the National Conference.[1]

One of the most distinctive features of the Constitution is the flag of the organization. The relevant provision stipulates that the organization shall have a flag with the symbol of "Halwala", meaning "a plough". This, naturally, associates itself with the peasantry, which constitutes nearly ninety-five per cent of the population. The flag has a red background, with the symbol of plough in white on it. Its length and breadth being five and three inches respectively.[2] Commenting upon the choice of the flag, S. Budh Singh, a veteran National Conferencite said, "It is the flag that symbolizes our unity and history". It is believed that S. Budh Singh was the man who insisted on giving to the organization a flag of this type. He had remarked at the meeting of the Conference, which debated the choice of the flag, that the flag should not depict the beauty and charm of Kashmir but its toiling millions. It should represent the peasantry, the labour, workers and other such exploited people. S. Budh Singh and Lalla Roop Lal Vakil of Poonch, therefore, suggested the symbol of the plough to be imprinted on the blood (red) of the toilers. According to Budh Singh this blood was reflected in the houses, paddy fields, bungalows, palaces etc. on which the rich had erected their status and luxurious lives.

1. Articles II and III, n. 12.
2. Article XXI, n. 12.

Mr. Khrushchev and Mr. Bulganin, on their visit to Kashmir, were pleasantly surprised on observing a flag of this type.

Commitment

Equipped with the Constitution, the Conference leaders impressed upon the people—both by their ideas and deeds—that they were fighting for the high ideals of democracy and socialism. They had clearly diagnosed the socio-economic ills of the people and were convinced that they were in a position to provide solutions to these. This could be done through political education, which was, therefore, directed to preparing the people to fight for political independence which would enable the National Conference to capture power and redeem their promises to the people. It was in the context of political education that the Sheikh remarked at Mirpur : "The foremost duty of the National Conference is to make the people conscious of the happenings in the State and make them distinguish between good and bad. I am sure that the National Conference has the capacity to make people understand the benefits of national unity, communal harmony and socialist attitudes".[1]

Towards this end the National Conference had to strive hard, and used its platform for this objective rightly. Such political education was the main objective of the organization and people were made conscious of their socio-economic problems. The Presidential address at the Baramulla session of the National Conference quotes the following from Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the Frontier Gandhi's speech :

> "I was pained to observe the poverty in Kashmir, and when I entered Jammu province, I thought the conditions of the common man there to be different under the Hindu Ruler, but it is a surprise to find the Jammu Hindu as much poor as the Muslim in Kashmir. Therefore, I am convinced that it is not a question of Hindu or a Musalman but the capitalist system that sucks all men alike."[2]

1. S.M. Abdullah, *Presidential Address*, Mirpur annual conference, 1943, p. 17.
2. Budh Singh, *Presidential Address*, Baramulla session, 29th Sept., 1940, p. 32.

The Presidential address at the annual Conference at Baramulla gives a bleak description of the socio-economic problems in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It speaks of the corruption, unemployment, lack of sanitation, lack of rural education, lack of irrigation facilities and mineral exploitation, and laments the poor communication system in the State, having no bridges over nallas and rivers.[1] The President further describes, the exploitation of many by the few : hardly a lakh out of forty lakh Muslims, a lakh out of four lakh non-Muslims and only one thousand out of sixty thousand Sikhs were well off. And these consisted of jagirdars, *numberdars*, *zaildars*, *mansabdars* and some of the salaried classes. The exploited sections were peasantry, the workers, and the labourers, belonging to different faiths. The exploiters were united, even though they professed different religions, whereas the exploited lower classes were divided by the rich on the basis of religion to further their exploitative plans.[2]

Amongst the classes, the peasantry was the hardest hit. It constituted ninety per cent of the population and was exploited by *Rajas*, *Jagirdars*, *Sahukars*, *Zaildars*, *Mansabdars* and also by religious preachers.[3] The preachers were *Gianis*, *Pandits*, *Sanths* and *Sadhus*, having control over shrines and religious places.[4] They were granted certain concessions by the Maharaja and protected their exploitative ways ; consequently, they exploited the simpletons of the society.[5] The Presidential address provides a long list of the manifestations of exploitation, which are as under :—

(1) The Government agents and privileged classes loaded on the backs of citizens, two and a half or three maunds (one quintal and eighteen kgs) of baggage

1. *Ibid*, p. 19.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 36—37.
3. *Ibid*.
4. *Ibid*.
5. *Ibid*, p. 4.

when they had to cross high peaks of the Banihal pass, because horses could not do so in winter ;

(2) In Kishtwar and Ramban men were loaded with one and a half maunds each to cross fourteen to fifteen thousand feet high mountains clad with snow. The same type of '*begar*' was imposed on the poor during summer ;

(3) Men were collected and haunted like cattle, and sometimes jailed, for purposes of '*begar*' ;

(4) All were subjected to forced labour without discrimination and compensation ;

(5) There was no provision for medical aid during maternity and no shelter and clothes for the poor, either in cold winter or in the scorching heat of summer ;

(6) The peasantry was under the burden of debts of the *Sahukars* ;

(7) Tyranny was also perpetrated by Revenue Department while collecting taxes, cesses and other kinds of levies ;

(8) Corrupt practices by Forest and Police officials were rampant.[1]

Condemning the methods of taxation prevailing at the time, the President of the National Conference revealed that a Kashmiri peasant had to pay four times more land revenue than the Panjab peasant, even though the Panjab land is more fertile than that in Kashmir. In Kashmir even meadows and grazing grounds were heavily taxed, and this brought the State exchequer sixty-two lakhs of rupees annually.[2]

Describing the pitiable condition of the labour class, the President in his address notes that the wages paid to them did not come even to a subsistence level. Additionally, they were made to undergo corporal punishment in the form of carrying two maunds of load each on their backs to pull carts like draft horses with heaps of stones in them. There were

1. *Ibid*, pp. 6—8.
2. *Ibid*, p. 15.

labourers in fields, in jungles, on roads, on mountains, on boats etc. struggling against opposing winds—in fact everywhere struggling against life. For proof the President asked the audience to observe the condition of labour at Tangmarg and Pahalgam, and then to see them in the Panjab during winter.[1]

Muslims in Kashmir were more frustrated than any other community. Their position in government service was not only low but insignificant. There were sixty-six senior officers (Secretaries and Directors), in Government of Jammu and Kashmir in 1943. Fifty-three of these were non-Muslims, and out of thirteen Muslim officers seven were non-Kashmiris. So, there were only six officers representing 77·11 per cent of population in the State. The total population, according to the census of 1941, was 40,21,616 and Muslims constituted 77·11 per cent.[2]

Such a sad socio-economic plight was enough provocation for the National Conference to fight not only for the redressal of grievances but also for complete independence and egalitarianism. However, these attempts were thwarted by reactionaries, who had to be fought at every stage. Religion came handy to these vested interests for obstructing the progress to egalitarianism and social justice. The National Conference, therefore, discarded religion as a factor in politics because no religion in the world permits tyranny against the weak, or exploitation of man by man. It challenged believers in the Quran, the Bhagwad Gita and the Granth Sahib to prove that any religious scripture upholds the idea of exploitation of any sort. So, the Conference leaders pledged to "eradicate communalism in all its forms, which reactionaries tried to instil. This way alone slavery would perish and freedom would dawn".[3] Condemning leaders of reaction, who propagated communalism, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah

1. *Ibid*, pp. 17—19.
2. *Annual Administration Report of J and K*, Ranbir Government Press, Jammu, 1944, Appendix I.
3. S.M. Abdullah, n. 15, p. 16.

proclaimed that he would fight them because they misled common people. They pronounced that their community is exploited by the counter community and to prove it to be a concocted tale. It misled the communities and endangered the communal harmony, which is the cultural heritage of the people of Kashmir. The Sheikh believed that it was the rich of all the communities who exploited the poor indiscriminately. He, therefore, advised the people to abandon communalism and unite under the banner of the National Conference. It is better to fight, Sheikh asserted, for a definite economic programme than for different political goals. To divide people on communal lines, he believed, was to weaken the movement.[1]

Reactionaries are a constant threat to a forward-looking movement and, therefore, reorientation of politics to a progressive goal resulted in a sharp retaliation from them. In order to initiate division in the national movement, the reactionaries brought a multiplicity of parties into existence. The Muslim Conference had already given birth to a *dissident* group on the emergence of the National Conference, the Jammu Political Conference, and some more parties with Kashmiri Pandits predominance followed. Those parties of reaction had one identical programme ; they had to protect 'vested interests' and defend the Maharaja's rule. Some progressive organizations, like Kashmir National Congress, having a programme similar to that of the National Conference amalgamated with the latter. It is worth-while to record that the Islamabad session of the National Conference ratified the resolution known as 'the National Demand' in the contemporary history of Kashmir. It was a joint declaration issued by twelve leaders of the State, representing all shades of progressive opinion, which upset the reactionaries. The Hindu reactionaries were jubilant whereas the Muslim reactionaries were apprehensive ; the former exploited the Sheikh's words that he was 'a Muslim first and a Muslim last', whereas the latter tried to make capital by saying that the National

1. *Ibid.*

Conference had swung to the side of the Indian National Congress.[1] The reaction was sharper when the National Conference recommended the elections to the legislature on the basis of joint electorates, reserving seats for the minorities and guaranteeing in the Constitution the protection of their linguistic religious, cultural, political and economic rights. This protection was in accordance with the principles enunciated, accepted or implemented by the Indian National Congress. There was also a sharp reaction to the resolution passed by the Working Committee of the National Conference urging the government of the State to make Hindustani, the recognized Court language of the State, as one of the compulsory subjects, as formerly.[2]

The reactionaries did not even permit the National Conferencites to sit still or function normally in the legislature, even after the National Conference decided to enter the Praja Sabha with the objective of fighting for the cause of the people from inside the legislature. The Presidential address at the annual Conference at Baramulla referred to the reason for the resignation by their elected representatives. The President attributed the resignation to the insincerity of the Government and the manipulations of the reactionaries. The members of the progressive organization in the legislature had desired the passage of the bill with regard to *Kahcharai*, prepared on the recommendation of a Committee. This was rejected because the nominated members did not like the bill on the plea that it would entail a loss in the revenue of the State.[3] This convinced the elected representatives of the people that the legislature was not a representative body and the government had no wish to give it a representative character as it had no interest in the welfare of the people. The National Conferencites, therefore, invariably opposed such

1. P.N. Bazaz *The Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, Pamposh Publications, Delhi, pp. 178-79.
2. *Ibid.*
3. S. Budh Singh, *Presidential Address*, National Conference, Baramulla session. 29th September, 1940, p. 2.

legislation as was against the interests of the people.[1] As an interim measure, the National Conference recommended, in the Praja Sabha—through various resolutions—the following for improvement in the standards of the people :—

(1) Land revenue to be reduced by 50% ;
(2) Graduated taxation ;
(3) Abolition of tax on grazing fields ;
(4) Employment for all educated unemployed ;
(5) Exploitation of minerals ;
(6) Agriculture, technical and general education for all ;
(7) Eradication of rural debts ;
(8) Medical aid for all ;
(9) Ownership of land to be granted to the tillers in Poonch ;
(10) Reduction of half the taxation levied on the villagers inhabiting the outskirts of hunting places.[2]

The reactionaries in the legislature thwarted the passage of most of these resolutions and hardly two or three resolutions were adopted by the Praja Sabha.

Outside Impact

Kashmir could not be isolated from the Indian sub-continent. Before 1947 the impact on Kashmir was a two-way traffic. The Indian movements and ideas had an impact on the movements and ideas in Kashmir, and vice-versa. One of the forums/clearing houses for this impact was the States Peoples' Conference, which had its inaugural session in 1927. This Conference met regularly uptil the eve of India's Independence in 1947. Initially, the States People's Conference had the objective of deciding the future of the princely States in the context of British India ; and in case the British were to withdraw, it had to determine the future status of these States. India had more than six hundred princely States, these were autocratic, both in essence and in the structure of

1. *Ibid*, p. 28.
2. *Ibid*, p. 27.

government.[1] Since the inception of the States Peoples Conference, politics in British India had been moving fast ; and in due course a marked polarization was observed and felt in the states also. However, it did not bring polarisation in the politics of Kashmir. The National Conference was led to associate itself with the States Peoples Conference, of which the Sheikh was Vice-President. This polarized nature of politics led the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League to examine issues through their own goggles. Both the parties had exactly opposed views on the states. The Congress rendered, "valuable assistance to the States Peoples' rights by asserting the rights of the people in States as an issue in the settlement of India's Constitutional problem".[2] The Muslim League's attitude, however, was quite different : "The predominant note in the Muslim League's attitude was one of unconcern and non-intervention in States affairs in general."[3]

The National Conference had gone whole hog with the Indian National Congress in asserting that the people should be associated with the governance of their States. As early as the beginning of 1939, the political prisoners in Kashmir were released and they belined for Ludhiana to attend the States Peoples Conference. This session was presided over by Mr. Nehru. The session there supported the demand that all the facts and treaties entered into by the Maharajas of the States and the Paramount Power should stand revoked. This Conference resolved : "It is strongly demanded that all obsolete treaties and pacts should stand revoked and the sovereign power should refuse to protect and aid the Raja and Rulers who oppress the freedom movements in the States."[4]

1. Sisir Gupta, *Kashmir : A Study in India-Pakistan Relations*, Asia Publishing House, Delhi, p. 32.
2. *Ibid*, p. 41.
3. *Ibid*, p. 42.
4. G.M. Sadiq, *Kashmir Chod Do* (Urdu), Sangam Publications Ltd., Lahore, p. 11.

The National Conference, therefore, moved next from the forum of the States Peoples Conference to that of the Indian National Congress, for both the inspiration and the policies that the Congress stood for. The view points of the Congress and the League with regard to the Princely States, however, differed further after the partition of India in 1947. According to the Muslim League constitutionally and legally the Indian States would be independent sovereign states on the termination of British paramountcy and would be free to decide their future for themselves and adopt any course they would like.[1] The Indian National Congress linked the issue of the people of the States with that of Indian freedom. The National Conference, therefore, decided to choose the way of the Indian National Congress on the ground that, whatever the fate of India, the States people should have self-government.

Further, the Sheikh showed great skill in strategy and tactics by aligning the State movement with national liberation movement in British India. This dovetailing between the national liberation movement in India and that of the National Conference in Kashmir was aimed at a joint struggle against British Imperialism and its overthrow.[2] This fact was stated by the Sheikh in his historic speech, in which he is reported to have said : "Dogras have infringed our soul. Though the image of Kashmiris is being distorted, yet the fact remains that they are chivalrous and decent in nature. It is time for action. You shall have to fight against your poverty by eradicating slavery first. You shall come to the field of political struggle like Mujahids. This struggle is directed not only to achieve the ends in the State but it is directed against the British imperialist in the whole of India."[3]

1. Sisir Gupta, n. 31, p. 48.
2. D. Chesnokor, *Historical Materialism*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, p. 221.
3. G.M. Sadiq, n. 34, p. 29.

The National Conference leaders were mostly influenced by the leaders of the Indian National Congress; in particular was Shri Nehru's impact on the Sheikh the greatest.[1] Nehru was invited to visit Kashmir by the National Conference. During this time Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyneger was the Prime Minister of Kashmir. He could understand the implications of tour of Kashmir by Pt. Nehru. He, therefore, asked the non-Muslims to participate fully with the National Conference, the result being that some non-Muslims, who had resigned from National Conference, rejoined the organization except Shri P. N. Bazaz. Non-Muslims contributed lavishly to the funds raised for the reception of Shri Nehru, who was given a warm welcome in Srinagar. The National Conferencites were put in good heart. Pandits felt secure in the ranks of the National Conference and the socialists felt jubilant that the organization was put on progressive lines. Pandit Nehru was heard by the people, he listened to all and lobbied for the National Conference on account of its progressive out-look. Badshah Khan, the Frontier Gandhi—who accompanied Nehru on Kashmir visit—also spoke to the people. This visit gave a moral boost to non-Muslims and progressives but disheartened the Muslim Leaguers. On this visit, speaking to the people Nehru said, "The real source of power is the people, and when it struggles to bring revolution it brings life". The National Conference, therefore, decided that it would struggle till it would bring freedom and life to the people of the State.

The National Conference expected both Indian National Congress and the Muslim League to support the freedom struggle in the State. To this end, in the beginning, it desired the Indian National Congress and the League to come to a settlement. The Sheikh in his presidential address, said, "There could be no greater tragedy for the Indians than the political differences they exaggerate and carry them to a point wherefrom no return is possible".[2] However, neither did the

1. P.N. Bazaz, n. 26, p. 183.
2. S.M. Abdullah, *Presidential Address*, Mirpur Annual Session, 9th April, 1943, p. 10,

two major Indian political parties come to a compromise nor could the National Conference secure joint support from these parties. In a bid to effect a compromise at the State level the National Conference invited Mr. Jinnah to Kashmir to settle the differences between the National Conference and the Muslim Conference. In response Mr. Jinnah visited Kashmir early in June 1944, and stayed in Srinagar for nearly two months.

Mr. Jinnah could not help the situation. When he spoke from the National Conference platform he conveyed to them that though the National Conference had accorded reception to him as the President of the All India Muslim League yet "99 per cent of the Muslims who met me are of the opinion that the Muslim Conference alone is the representative organization of the State Muslims".[1] Jinnah's attitude and pronouncements angered the Sheikh and the National Conference leadership. This visit of Mr. Jinnah deepened the conflict between the State National Conference on the one hand and the State Muslim Conference and the All India Muslim League on the other. The National Conference leadership thenceforth completely aligned itself with the Indian National Congress.

Constitutional Reforms

While the National Conference, despite all the opposition from the Muslim Conference, was making rapid headway, the Maharaja tried appeasement through constitutional reforms. He broadened the representative character of the Praja Sabha by raising the elected membership to forty, as against the earlier thirty-three, in a house of seventy-five. Eleven were termed 'official members', and the nominated ones numbered twenty-four.[2] Maharaja Hari Singh further appointed and

1. P.N. Bazaz, n. 26, cit. p. 210.
2. The *J. and K. Praja Sabha Debates, Official Report*, The Ranbir Government Press, Jammu, Volume XI, 1943, p. *iii*, Read with *A Handbook of J. and K. State*, Ranbir Govt. Press, p. 35.

tried many Prime Ministers in succession to improve the situation. Ayyenger was succeeded by Maharaj Singh. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah referred to Maharaj Singh as an alien, who had no knowledge of Kashmir, whereas P. N. Bazaz calls him a progressive Prime Minister with whose policies neither Hari Singh saw eye to eye nor could the reactionaries tolerate him. He had, therefore, to resign only after three months and seven days of Prime Ministership. Maharaj Singh was succeeded by two Prime Ministers, namely, Kailash Narain Haksar and Sir Benegal Narsingh Rao. Haksar was a bureaucrat. Before Maharaj Singh left the State, the Maharaja of Kashmir announced comprehensive reforms in the so-called constitutional government as well as in the administration. A Royal Commission, under the presidency of Chief Justice Sir Ganga Nath, was instituted about which it is said that "out of twenty non-official members the majority belonged to the vested interests and reactionary classes".[1] The two members from the National Conference were G. M. Sadiq, a socialist and Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, not a reactionary. The socialist party was not associated with the Commission. The progressives and the National Conference did not accept the new constitutional reforms for they never considered the terms of reference of the Commission other than retrograde.

Another Commission was instituted to enquire into the firings in Jammu, where there was scarcity of foodgrains. Jammu, among Dogras, was inhabited by Rajputs, who were declared a privileged class in terms of the Arms Act, which gave them "possession of firearms, together with the ammunition required by reason of their having it as an object of religious worship, at the rate of one fire-arm for each such family."[2] But the families were dying of starvation. As a consequence a rebellion in Jammu was initiated and in the encounter nine men were killed. This led to Haksar's

1. P.N. Bazaz, n. 26, p. 202.
2. *The Jammu and Kashmir Arms Rule*, 1998 (Bikrami), Ranbir Government Press, Jammu, Part I, article III, 1941.

disrepute and public ill-will, and the result was that he had to quit.

The Maharaja's experience of non-Kashmiris as Prime Ministers did not make him happy. He, therefore, appointed a Kashmiri bureaucrat, R. C. Kak, as the Prime Minister of Kashmir. Kak was a Kashmiri by race, birth and breeding, but he did not show any new approach to the governance of the State and took to the traditional methods of oppression. Kak has been in office for very little time when the grand convention of the National Conference met at Sopore. Jawaharlal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad and Abdul Gaffar Khan were the grandees of the Indian National Congress who attended the Convention and spoke to the workers. Kak was frustrated and the National Conference rallied the masses under its flag and R. C. Kak felt discomfitted.

Socialist Ground

The National Conference alone did not represent progressive and socialist elements in the State. There was one more organization which lay exclusive claim to socialist objectives. It was all Jammu and Kashmir Kisan Conference and its first president was Abdus Salam Yettu. Soon after its establishment Kissan committees sprang up in all niabats, tehsils and districts. The party first came into being in Islamabad district. The Socialist Party, however, realised the significance of the Kissan Conferences and decided to hold a congress of the working classes of Kashmir in Kahamarg.[1] The inception of the party, according to P. N. Bazaz, brought to surface a new socialist fervour. The Socialist Party first met at Dyalagam. The Dyalagam convention passed many resolutions, and one of the resolutions rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan according to which the future of the States was to be the responsibility of the princely rulers alone. This was just the line of the National Conference and of the States People's

1. P.N. Bazaz, n. 26, p. 229.

Conference. In a telegram to the Cabinet Mission, the Convention asserted that one man (the ruler) could not repres nt workers and the peasantry. Later, these socialists met in conference at Kahamarg as scheduled earlier. The 'pandal' of the Conference was defended by five hundred armed volunteers, headed by Abdul Gani Magray, chief of the Kissan Conference Volunteer Corps.[1] The following extracts will throw enough light on the socialist character of the Conference[2] :—

Welcoming the delegates to the congress, Abdullah Mir, President of the Reception Committee, observed :

> "Only a toiler can feel and understand the agony of a fellow-toiler ; none else can do so. The upper classes are only misleading us by their alluring slogans and schemes. They, in no way, want our freedom."

Further, he said :—

> "The freedom movement in our country is now fifteen years old. It has been dinned into our ears since long that the movement aims at complete emancipation of the toiling masses. But freedom is yet to come and, meanwhile, during the past six years of global war the upper classes, in no uncertain terms, laid before us their interpretation of freedom. During this period commodities essential for the life of the people became scarce in villages, not for all but only for the masses. The upper classes got these commodities in abundance in our name, but totally deprived us of the same. Miserable as we began to feel, we, however, became conscious of the fact that the upper classes and the toiling masses were two distinct forces. It is wise to believe that the toiling masses can never achieve freedom so long as they do not have their own organiza-

1. *Ibid*, p. 236.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 238-240.

tion, free from influence of the upper classes. An awakening has been noticeable among the masses during the past nine months and, naturally, the upper feel ill at ease. They have, however, begun to realize that we are undoubtedly tyrannised and oppressed."

Regarding the future of the peasant movement, Abdullah declared :—

"As a matter of fact, the upper classes are worried about their personal interests. They believe if the toiling masses carried on their organizational activities unchecked and unhampered their vested interests will come to an end. This is why they seek a compromise with us so that they could obstruct our march. But we have met here in a Conference to warn them that our movement will live till the toiling masses of the State achieve complete freedom."

In his Presidential address Abdus Salam Yettu stated the aims and objectives of the Kissan movement as follows :—

"The movement of the toiling masses in the world has awakened us also. We have begun to look at the freedom struggle of our country from a different angle. Now political freedom alone is not our cherished goal. We demand and crave for social, economic and spiritual emancipation as well. The toiling masses of the sub-continent of India not only want to throw away the yoke of foreign imperialism but are also keen to face themselves from the bondage of indigenous feudalism and capitalism. The day of deliverance from alien rule is not far off. Events bear testimony to the fact that the British cannot stay long in India There is an awakening in the country, and the British hold it in subjugation. But let me pose a question. Who will replace the British authority in India? Will there be a government of the upper classes or one representing the toiling masses ?"

He further added :—

"We believe that so long as it is not decided who the future rulers are to be, we can neither support Akhand Hindustan nor side with the demand of Pakistan. Our first task is to do away with the prevailing social and economic inequality and injustice and lay the foundations of a new and just order of society. It is only when this objective is achieved that the people of India can themselves decide whether they want to preserve the unity of the country or divide it."

Stating the aims of the movement, he observed :—

"Following is the foot-prints of the workers of Europe. We have to put an end to the capitalistic and feudalistic social order so that a new society based on social justice and equality is brought into being. We want an end of all kinds of exploitations so that the peasants are not tyrannised and mill-owners get no opportunity to rob the workers of the fruits of their labour. All laws aimed at sucking the blood of the toiling masses need to be repealed and abolished."

About the experience the workers had gained during the freedom movement Abdus Salam Yattu said :

"The reason that the upper classes benefited during the freedom movement is that both the toiling masses and the upper class took part in this struggle, and whereas the former fought for freedom, the latter used it to their advantage. Why it happened is not difficult to understand. We had been entertaining hazy and vague notions about our goal so far, but now the freedom movement has reached a new stage. The toiling masses and the upper classes have fallen out. We want to revolutionize the present unjust society so that the toiling masses get their political and economic rights. This we call real freedom."

Explaining the future of freedom movement, he declared :—

"Till now the upper classes exploited us because we were not clear about our goal but they find that such exploitation is not possible in future. Freedom for us means establishment of a new social order in our country, which knows no exploitation and guarantees equal, social, economic and political status for all. Our movement aims at affording all the opportunities and facilities to the toiling masses here in our country, which a man in this world is entitled to. The upper classes have raised communal slogans so that the masses are misled in the name of religion. Also, with a view to preserving their vested interests, the upper classes have founded parties in the name of the nation and the country. The toiling masses have nothing to do either with the communal organisations or the so-called nationalist parties. Our struggle knows no communal barriers or nationalist prejudice. We are hostile to all distinctions based on colour, creed or race. We believe in a society which is free from the evils of landlordism, capitalism and feudalism and which is opposed to exploitation of man by man."

Abdus Salam concluded by saying :—

"Our movement is world-wide. Hundreds of millions of the toiling masses throughout the world are associated with it. It is bound to succeed sooner or later. If we organize ourselves and march unitedly towards our goal, we can establish the society of our conception sooner than is expected."

Kissan Congress at Kahamarg adopted many resolutions. Most of these resolutions, as a rule, were initiated by individual delegates. The congress, in unequivocal terms, condemned the exploitation of man by man. It determined to end it in every form and shape after overthrowing the

feudal and capitalist regime in the State. P. N. Bazaz writes about one resolution :

> "Yet another resolution expressed the solidarity of the State working classes with the workers of the world. One resolution forebade the tillers of the soil to take the place of any tenant who is ejected by a *chakdar* for no valid reasons."[1]

Most of the organizations, with socialist members on their rolls—except the Kissan Conference—had amalgamated with the National Conference, by 1945. The National Conference had, therefore, a strong base among the masses. The leadership also had educated and prepared the people for a bigger fight. The people were prepared not only for political independence but also for economic independence. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, in his presidential address at the annual conference held at Sopore, remarked : "In future only those governments will be a success which are economic democracies —political democracies cannot cure the pains of the poor".[2]

"Naya Kashmir" was presented to the Maharaja in the form of a memorandum and, simultaneously, circulated among the people. This has made the people conscious of their political and economic objectives and prepared them for a still bigger sacrifice than they had made in 1931. In the Conference at Sopore, the Sheikh, therefore, stressed the need for 'voluntary sacrifice' to achieve the goal. The first sacrifice of the National Conferencites, the Sheikh observed, was to provide full time service to the cause, without desiring any comforts in return. There were men who, after having been arrested 'relaxed' in jails and later last the sacrificial zest. However, the Sheikh desired them to go in for voluntary sacrifice—not under compulsion—within or without the jails.[3]

1. *Ibid*, p. 241.
2. S.M. Abdullah, *Presidential address*, J and K National Conference, 1945, p. 15.
3. *Ibid*, p. 83.

Quit Kashmir and Its Consequences

The bigger fight or rebellion, namely "Quit Kashmir Movement" was also triggered by the non-implementation of the *Naya Kashmir* programme by the government. The National Conference had desired its implementation after it was submitted to the Maharaja. As a result the Sheikh warned the Maharaja that its non-implementation might result in adverse consequences.[1]

Masses became politically more and more conscious, politics and economy were in doldrums—which led to rebellion—corruption was rampant, controls were ineffective, hoarders and black-marketeers made hay.[2] The result could be nothing but the overthrow of the government and of the despotic ruler.

The 'Quit Kashmir Movement' was also attributed to the Russian example. G. M. Sadiq wrote : "Some men clearly find Russian and Communist hand in the movement, which is wrong. It is, however, correct to say that the freedom, we fight for, has had an impact of many such movements".[3] "A rumour is afloat that Russians have influenced the political leadership in the State and Communists are playing mischief", wrote the *Vir Bharat*.[4] Without going into merits of the Russian influence one could say that most of the writers on "Quit Kashmir Movement' refer to the Russian influence without substantiating their opinion. However, one could easily attribute it to the influence of the Russian Revolution.

In the post-war period, after 1945, the international scene was changing rapidly. Two great facts were emerging in the Asian continent. The first was that European empires were collapsing and, secondly, China was being dominated by the Communists.[5] The sub-continent of India in general, and

1. *Ibid*, p. 26.
2. *Ibid*, p. 23.
3. G. M. Sadiq, *Kashmir Chood Do*, Sangam Publishers Ltd., Lahore, (Urdu), p. 14.
4. *Ibid*, p. 136.
5. W. U. Ferguson and Geoffrry Bruun, *A Survey of European Civilization*, Houghton Mifflin Company, p. 975.

Kashmir in particular—being adjacent to China and Russia—could not remain uninfluenced by such events.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, having risen to the status of a charismatic leader, challenged the lagality of Maharaja's rule, in unequivocal terms. Before the Cabinet Mission as well as from every platform, he demanded abrogation of the Treaty of Amritsar on grounds of its illegality and inequity. He appealed to the people to make sacrifices for the cause of freedom and prepare themselves to rebel once again against the autocratic rule.[1]

The National Conference was, therefore, confident that in the event of its launching a fresh movement the masses, rallying round the party, would rise against the despotic ruler. 20th May, 1945, was a historic day for the people of Kashmir. On the one hand, the Maharaja was to be received in the summer capital of the State, Srinagar, and on the other, the police authorities in Srinagar were informed that Sheikh Abdullah had been put under arrest at Ghari (Gadi), on the Srinagar—Rawalpindi Road. The army and the police were alerted in Srinagar and elsewhere in the valley and billeted at sensitive places. Hundreds were arrested and many were injured in encounters with the police and the army. An operational headquarter was established to 'Coordinate and command all the aggressive designs of the army and the police against the masses'.[2] The very next day the police arrested three hundred volunteers of the National Conference and twenty were killed.[3]

The 'Quit Kashmir Movement' spread like wild fire and in every corner of the State people rebelled against the government and the princely ruler. Mass arrests in every village, town and city had the appearance of a total rebellion, hartals continued for many days; army and the police had a free hand. An old shopkeeper, refusing cigarettes without payment to some Gurkha soldiers, was dragged down to the road

1. G. M. Sadiq, n. 52, p. 42.
2. *Ibid*, p. 39.
3. *Ibid*, p. 40.

and beaten to death.[1] With regard to the situation after the 'Quit Kashmir' agitation the late G.M. Bakshi wrote : "I have contented myself with quoting only what has appeared in the press. The actual happenings are even more horrible. What is happening today is still worse—arrests, mass meetings, punitive police, lathi-charges, mass searches, complete terrorization are in full swing."[2]

There was a sharp reaction within the State against the tyranny perpetrated by the Dogra ruler. The Indian National Congress was already on the side of the National Conference. The Indian Muslims as well as their press came out in support of the 'Quit Kashmir Movement'. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru expressed deep concern over the situation in Kashmir. He remarked that the State government was out to suppress the freedom movement on one or the other pretext and added that it was futile to discuss grave issues on a legal basis when emotions ran high and the blood was being shed.[3] Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan the Frontier Gandhi, was concerned over detention of his friend, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, and about the innocent men and women who were maltreated and slaughtered mercilessly.[4]

Rajni Palm Dutt, correspondent 'the Daily Worker London', visited Kashmir when the 'Quit Kashmir' movement was on. He recorded many things with regard to the Movement. After his meeting with the underground leaders, he assessed that the movement had all the characteristics of a revolution. He had seen walls of mosques pierced with bullets and numberless wounded persons were struggling for survival. To him the Movement was steadfast and strong in its objectives. He was not permitted to see the Political Resident in Kashmir ; and, therefore, remarked : "Probably, the Resident

1. *Ibid*, p. 41.
2. G. M. Bakshi, *Kashmir Today*, p. 2.
3. A Press Statement, n. 52. p. 48.
4. A Press Statement, May 24, 1946.

does not like to reveal the real situation to the people in Europe."[1]

Poets sang in praise of the freedom fighters in Kashmir. Hafeez Jullundari, Sahir Ludhianvi and others were among the prominent ones. Hafeez sang :

The lion roared in the valley,
The hills echoed in the valley,
The bell awakened the worker and the peasant,
All sides resounded with the call of freedom,
The capitalist shattered in its craze,
The ears of luxury sounded death,
And the industrialist was disturbed in the rest.[2]

In a more radical tone Sahir Ludhianvi addressed Kashmiris :

Red salute to you oh ! Kashmir peasantry,
Red salute to you oh ! Men of integrity,
Red salute to you, Red salute from us.[3]

Many organizations of workers and peasants also joined the freedom fighters in Kashmir. They took to strikes, hartals and agitations to show sympathy with the Kashmiris. The Secretary of the Communist Party of India, Puran Chand, appealed to all Indian political parties, workers and intellectuals to lend their support to the people of Kashmir in their fight against despotic rule. Appealing to them to forget their differences and unite with them on the issue of freedom, he observed : "To stand by them (Kashmiris) in their attainment of the goal should be pride for all."[4] The Indian Communist Party Punjab Committee, in a press statement, appealed to all freedom-loving people of India to help the people of Kashmir in their fight for egalitarianism and to sympathise with the

1. G. M. Sadiq, n. 52, p. 135.
2. *Ibid*, p. 34.
3. Full poem in the Naya Zamana, August 25, 1946.
4. G. M. Sadiq, n. 52, p. 50.

movement to liquidate the 'changhise' rule in the State.[1] The Kissan Committee of the Panjab also in a statement conveyed to the Government of Kashmir that they were prepared to launch a movement in sympathy with the people of Kashmir. They stated that they could not be just idle spectators while oppression continued in Kashmir, a State adjacent to the Panjab. The Secretary General of the Communist Party of India stated that the party considers Kashmir freedom struggle as part of the Indian freedom struggle. He warned the Maharaja of Kashmir of the consequences of the tyranny he had let loose in the State and exhorted all parties to celebrate the 'Kashmir Day' to indicate their full support to the freedom fighters. He said, "We are all praise for the National Conference on account of the light it showed to 585 princely States of India, the beacon-light for the freedom movement. These States of India should follow the footsteps of the Kashmir Movement. We must all help 1/4th of the population of the Indian states who are subjected to the tyranny of despotic rulers."[2]

Newspapers in India also did not sit still. They protested against the tyranny perpetrated in Kashmir as did individuals and organizations in India. All the journals and chronicles commented on the events that occurred in Kashmir.[3] *The Naya Zamana* commented on the resistance shown by the people in Kashmir. It remarked that the people had in view the happenings in Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi, and as such they fought bravely. Kashmiris, the paper added, stuck to strategic places on roads and damaged bridges and stopped the movement of the army.[4] *The Tribune* of Lahore appealed to all Indians to give financial and moral help to the people of Kashmir. The paper justified the 'Quit Kashmir' move-

1. *The Naya Zamana*, Panjab, June 9, 1946.
2. Puran Chand Joshi, Statement to Press, July 13, 1946.
3. *The Tribune*, Lahore ; *The Dawn*, Delhi; *The Hindustan Times*, Delhi; *The Zamindar*, Lahore ; *The Bombay Sentinal*, Bombay ; *The Shahnaz*, Lahore; *The Ansari*, Delhi ; *The Naya Zamana*, Bombay; *The Ehsan*, Lahore; *The Prabhat*, Lahore; *The National Herald*. Lucknow.
4. *The Naya Zamana*, Bombay, June 2, 1946.

ment and declared that the 'Treaty of Amritsar' was outdated, immoral and illegal.[1] Another paper commented that during the first few days of the Movement, terror was let loose on the people when the situation, according to government sources, improved. The paper caustically remarked that it was similar to that which General Dyer had brought about at Amritsar in the Jalianwalla Bagh. It also remarked that the soul of a nation could not be controlled and mastered through oppression.[2] *The Hindustan Times*, observed, "Whatever the situation, tyranny and oppression are no cure for the problem. The State Government should know that the times are over when oppression could seek obedience and faith from the subjects."[3] *The Zamindar*, Lahore, condemned the Dogra army for indiscriminate killings in which even women and children were not spared. It remarked sarcastically that it could be only the pride of the Dogra army to do so.[4]

As a consequence of the agitation all workers of the National Conference, from the lowest to the highest were jailed. Not only the National Conferencites but also most of their families we e affected by the oppression. The 'Quit Kashmir' movement had involved the masses and there was complete anarchy which the Maharaja was unable to control and people hoped for immediate freedom and a better future for themselves. The Sheikh, as the undisputed leader, was prosecuted alongwith his three other lieutenants.[5] Most of the workers were detained or prosecuted for one or the other reason and Sheikh Mohammad Abdulla was the chief culprit. He, however, pleaded before the court in these words: "I am least interested in my defence. I would not have arranged for my defence but I feel the case is against the nation as a whole.[6]

1. *The Tribune*, Lahore, May 23, 1946.
2. *The Dawn*, Delhi, May 23, 1946.
3. *The Hindustan Times*, Delhi May 24, 1946.
4. *The Zamindar*, Lahore, May 26, 1946.
5. Kh. Mohiuddin Vakil, Mohammad Sultan Khan, and Pt. Sham Lal Saraf.
6. G. M. Sadiq, n. 52, p. 162.

Mr. Nehru was the Chief Defence Council advisor, and Mr. Asaf Ali, a nationalist and barrister, the prominent defence counsel. The Defence Council, in addition to these two stalwarts, consisted of many prominent lawyers from within the State.[1]

The prosecution counsel pleaded for the conviction of the Sheikh and his associates on grounds of sedition and rebellion. Nearly ten charges were levelled against him, and these were based on his exciting speeches. It was the Sheikh, the prosecution pleaded, who had instigated, provoked and abetted the people of the State to rebel against the so-called constitutional government of the State. The Sheikh was alleged to have said, "Freedom is the order of the day and hence Dogras could not deny it to the people of Kashmir. The agreement of 1846, known as the Treaty of Amritsar, is an obsolete one, and hence the Maharaja should abandon the throne to live in a village." It was also alleged that the Sheikh had asked the people to demolish and wipe out the 'Dogra Raj'. He was also alleged to have said, "I hope to avenge the treachery perpetrated against the Kashmiris in 1846 by Maharaja Gulab Singh, by taking revenge upon the present ruling Maharaja. I believe that bloodshed and sacrifice alone can decide the future of Kashmir, for revolt is the right of a slave".[2] The National Conference programmes were also advanced as charges against the Sheikh. The prosecution counsel pleaded that the National Conference stood for the abolition of despotic rule, Jagirdari system, and slavery in various forms.

From the defence counsel, Mr. Asaf Ali said, "This suit has historic importance and the statement presented to the court is not less than a peoples' charter. The posterity will remember it for generations to come. The suit gained such a tremendous importance that V. I. Ps. like Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, Sardar Patel and Mualana Azad were deeply interested in it. People of India and the Chancellor of the Chamber of

1. Pt. Jia Lal Kilam, Pt. Janki Nath Sapru, Pt. Amar Nath Raina, Pt. Rugh Nath, Pt. Janki Nath and Pt. Mohan Kishen Tiku.
2. *Khalid*, Kashmir, Clifton Press, Srinagar, October 1946, pp. 3-4.

Princes remained in touch with the happenings in the court. It is not an ordinary suit of an ordinary rebel, and it was not considered ordinary by the prosecution counsel also. It is related to the basic constitution of the State and with the basic rights of the people. The suit is based on the cardinal premise whether people have the right to ask for a responsible government. The prosecution has, however, proved that the people have no such right. My client has tried in statements to prove that the government should grant it to the people."[1]

The defence counsel asked whether the compromise plans between Indian leaders and the Cabinet Mission are illegal. "Is it a sin to ask for rights and responsible government?" the barrister asked. He said that democracy is the order of the day and welfare of the people and imperative of life ; therefore, the imprisonment of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and other leaders was unjust. He condemned the government by saying that the case was not against Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah but the people of the State as a whole. The government, therefore, should lose it because it was the verdict of the people against the government.[2]

Reiterating what Mr. Asaf Ali stated before the court, Mr. Nehru tracing the course of how the Sheikh became a living and outstanding symbol of the urges of the people of Kashmir, wrote, "The trial of the Sheikh became something much more than the trial of an individual ; it was a trial of the whole people, or perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that in the ultimate analysis it was a trial of the State authorities before the bar of public opinion. The former had tried to stem the flowing river of the great popular movement". Mr. Nehru strikes an optimistic note about the future of the 'Quit Kashmir Movement' when he says : "A real peoples' movement can never be crushed in this way, much less can it be crushed when India herself is putting an end to foreign rule."[3]

1. *Khalid*, Kashmir, Clifton Press, Srinagar, October 1946, p. 73.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Kashmir on Trial*, introduction by Nehru, p. 2.

However, the judgement was delivered, and the Sheikh was sentenced to three years' imprisonment on each of his so-called charges, and was to pay a fine of rupees five hundred. The leaders and the workers continued to go in imprisonment. During their internment many changes occurred in India and the State.

British Labour Government, in the wake of 1947, came out with a bold declaration that India would be free before June 1948. Lord Mountbatten, however, on his return, announced that sub-continent of India was to be free on 15th August, 1947. Further, it was to be divided into two dominions. This led to the massacre of Muslims in non-Muslim areas and of Hindus in Muslim areas. The Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, therefore, felt concerned about the future of the princely States for whom the British paramountcy would lapse with independence. As a consequence, Shri M.K. Gandhi, Shri Nehru and Shri Acharya Kripalani visited Kashmir. Nehru visited Kashmir on 18th June 1946 and was arrested at Domel on the Srinagar-Rawalpindi Road. At Kohala he was served with the notice prohibiting his entry into the State. He defied the order, was arrested and detained in Uri Dak Bungalow. Thereafter, he returned to Delhi on the third day. Acharya Kripalani and Gandhi visited Kashmir in May and August, 1947, respectively and met leaders of the National Conference and the Maharaja.

The result of these visits was that Sheikh Abdullah was released on 29th September, 1947, and Janak Singh, a Dogra, succeeded R. C. Kak as the Prime Minister of Kashmir. Most of the leaders and workers were released including Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who was released as an act of royal clemency by cancelling the unexpired period of his imprisonment. As a consequence, writes P.N. Bazaz, "With the appointment of Janak Singh the uncertainty about the future of the State was removed and it became clear that the Maharaja and his government, no less than the National Conference, had lined up with the Congress."[1]

1. P.N. Bazaz, n. 26, p. 275.

The National Conference had the majority appeal but other parties were not non-existent. The Kissan Mazdoor Conference, claiming to be socialist, in a resolution advised Maharaja to join Pakistan. After considering the issue at its Working Committee meeting, it said : "The Working Committee holds the view that the majority of the population desire to accede to Pakistan, and the welfare of the 39 lakhs of peasants and workers also lies in it.[1] Similarly, the Kashmir Socialist Party and the Muslim Conference also adopted resolutions asking the Maharaja to accede to Pakistan.

In the State, however, people had lined up with the National Conference because of its socialist programme. The Sheikh had from time to time highlighted the economic and social issues. The publication of 'the Naya Kashmir' plan was a challenge to reactionaries, and frustrated them. It also made people rally under the banner of the National Conference. In the introduction to 'Naya Kashmir' the Sheikh describes the aim of the National Conference in the words : "Our aim is to struggle against the poverty of the peasantry and handicraftsmen and the helplessness and intolerable poverty of the workers."[2]

Moreover, the compatibility of the Indian National Congress and the National Conference drew the latter to decide to accede to India. The Sheikh stated at the National Conference meeting:

> "Before the issue of accession, we had raised the slogan of 'Freedom'...whatever the role played by Pakistan during our freedom struggle it would not affect our decision. Nor will the fact that Mr. Nehru and the Indian National Congress has helped us in our freedom struggle affect our objective. "[3]

1. *Ibid*, p. 323.
2. *Naya Kashmir*, Nishat Press, Srinagar, p. 16.
3. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, *Presidential Address*, at Sher-i-Kashmir Park Broca's Press, 1949, p. 14.

He further added that the policies of the National Conference were progressive in nature and its day-to-day demands coincided with the national outlook.[1] Before the National Conference workers, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah remarked :

> "We reiterate and declare that we stand by our principles—by which we shall prove that we are virtually the builders of the New Kashmir."[2]

This emphasis on New Kashmir is essentially a reiteration of the socialist principles and ideas which were enshrined not only in the New Kashmir programme but also in the socialist ideas of our Kashmiri poet Mahjoor and Azad. These ideas of our progressive poets will be projected in the subsequent chapters.

1. *Ibid*, p. 10.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 10-14.

CHAPTER FOUR

Naya Kashmir : A Socialist Document

Genesis

'Naya Kashmir' is a socialist manifesto, both in content and essence. It is like the 'Communist Manifesto', brilliantly simple in its actual construction.[1] It is safely to be divided into three structural sections. The first deals with the Constitutional framework for the future of Kashmir. The second deals with economic planning, including agriculture and industrial planning. The third is the socio-educational scheme for the future of Kashmir.

Presenting the document to the All J & K National Conference, at its open session held late at night on Dec. 30, 1944, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah quoting a famous author, said :

> "Progress is a continuous struggle—a tempestuous struggle. This struggle is not a child's play. History has witnessed

1. *The Communist Manifesto : Socialist Landmark*, London : George Allen & Unwin, p. 35.

- many tyrants and their tyrannies but every generation has achieved progress with the help of far-sighted thinkers and the sacrifice of *Mujahids*, and today we inherit and protect this torch of light."[1]

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah remarked that the National Conference has been fighting the battle since the inception of the freedom movement. The struggle had continued, he remarked, but it should have a definite future programme. The Sheikh believed that the genesis of the struggle everywhere was the same : it is the struggle of the poor against the class of exploiters. "This struggle of ours is the struggle of the workers against those stone-hearted exploiters who as a class of discriminators have lost the sense of humanism", he added.[2] As a consequence 'Naya Kashmir' as the panecea for all socio-economic ills was enacted by the representatives of the people in the National Conference.

The draft of 'Naya Kashmir', presented by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah at the open session of the National Conference, was placed on record on behalf of the Working Committee. Actually, the programme of *Naya Kashmir* had been prepared to be placed before the Commission appointed by the Maharaja under a Royal Proclamation on 12th July, 1943. The terms of reference of the Commission included, among other things, questions about ways and means to further the progress of the people of the State, with special emphasis on their economic and political lives. Before the Commission started functioning, the National Conference decided to cooperate with the Commission. The Conference leaders were surprised to find that the Commission consisted of '*Jagirdars*' feudal elements, pensioners, 'Chakdars' and vested interests.[3] The National Conference which considered

1. *Naya Kashmir* : Political and Economic Planning, n. d., J & K National Conference (Urdu) Nishat Press, Srinagar, pp. 4 & 5.
2. *Ibid*, p. 5.
3 *Ibid*, p. 6.

itself to be the true representative body of people had been given only two seats on it.

The National Conference General Council met on 19th August, 1943, to decide whether it should participate in the deliberations of the Royal Commission or not. Deciding upon participation, the relevant portion of the resolution reads as follows :

> "In case the Royal Commission does not satisfy the demands of the people, because of their inherent shortcomings, and the Working Committee having apprehensions with regard to its outcome, the National Conference, in the interest of the State decides to participate in order not to complicate the situation, either domestic or international. It is the duty of our members to watch the Commission's programme and locate whether it is in consonance with the aims and objectives of the National Conference. If it (Commission) works contrary to the objectives of the organization, the members representing us shall report back to the General Council for further instructions."[1]

Mr. G.M. Sadiq and Mr. M.A. Beg were the two members nominated by the National Conference to represent it on the Commission. They remained associated with the Commission for sometime and found that the apprehensions of the National Conference were true. They observed that the Commission worked contrary to the objectives of the organization. Consequently, the two members, as directed, reported back to the Working Committee of the organization on 27th February, 1944. On considering the report, the two members were permitted to withdraw from the Commission. This was a signal for the National Conference to evolve its own political strategy. In another resolution the National Conference Working Committee decided not to present the memorandum—

1. Resolution of the General Council of the National Conference passed on 13th August, 1943.

prepared to be presented to the Commission through the representatives on the Commission. The relevant portion of the resolution reads as follows :

> "Under the circumstances the Committee decided not to present the memorandum to the Commission. The memorandum of the organization, drafted with a view to the future constitution of Kashmir, including collective economic security and prosperity and passed by the Working Committee, be directly presented to the Maharaja of Kashmir and be published for general circulation in the country."[1]

Thus, the draft of '*Naya Kashmir*', which was passed by the General Council of the organization, with a view to presenting it before the Royal Commission, became public on its publication for general circulation.

'Naya Kashmir' programme was published, consequently in 1944, along with a declaration. The proclamation, presenting the document, is full of high-sounding words, like :

> "We the people of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Frontier Districts, *illaqas* of Poonch, Chinani (in general terms called the subjects of the State of J & K), on complete equality and personal power do hereby unite to save succeeding generations from the deep pit of oppression, poverty, dishonour, superstition, and illiteracy and put them on the path of scientific knowledge, honest labour under a benevolent government, towards a happy and peaceful valley, so that it puts us in the ranks of workers in Asia and the world, to fulfil the objective. We are destined to accomplish in our history so that our country sparkles like a jewel on the snowhite forehead of Asia, we suggest to give to ourselves this constitution with our endorsement."[2]

1. *Naya Kashmir*, n. 2, p. 14.
2. Introduction to the Naya Kashmir Document, published in 1944.

Constitutional Framework

'*Naya Kashmir*' document is partly a political document. It envisages a constitutional framework for the future of the State. The fundamentals of the framework call for a responsible government of the democratic form. The framework consists of forty-nine articles. These articles envisage a National Assembly—as a true representative body representing all classes of society—to be the legislature of the future State. The legislature was to be elected on the basis of adult franchise, forty thousand voters electing one member to the legislature, and the tenure of office of the legislature was to be five years.[1]

This legislature was to elect its President and other office-bearers and to prescribe rules of business. Every bill passed by this Assembly was subject to the assent of the Maharaja of the State. These laws were subject to publication in the languages of different linguistic areas of the State and under the seal of the President of Assembly or the Maharaja of the State.[2]

The suggested constitution provided privileges to the members of the State legislature. No member could be arrested without the permission of the legislature, nor could he be punished for any offence during the session of the legislature—except, if necessary, the President of the Assembly could grant such a permission. Nobody could stop a member from taking part in the discussion of the legislature except when the Assembly might have taken a decision to that effect.[3]

The National Assembly had the right to appoint Commissions to go into any matter and it was obligatory on all institutions and individuals to supply all kinds of information if any when required. Immediately after the general elections, the Maharaja was to summon the Assembly. In case the Assembly was dissolved, the Maharaja had to have elections

1. *Naya Kashmir*, n. 2, Article 19.
2. *Ibid*, p. 36.
3. *Ibid*, Article 20.

for it within two months of the dissolution of the House.[1] Article 23 defined the functions and jurisdiction of the State legislature.

The suggested constitution envisaged the Maharaja along with his Cabinet to be the executive branch of the State. The Maharaja was to be the constitutional head of the State with powers to summon, prorogue and dissolve the legislature and order a referendum on vital issues. He had also to invite the leader of the majority party to form a ministry. There was to be a Council of Ministers—responsible to the legislature—to advise the Maharaja. The ministers were to be put in charge of various departments, which are listed in article 26.[2]

The constitution provided for a judicial system, at the top of which was the Supreme Court of Jammu and Kashmir, with courts lower down for all districts and tehsils. Urdu was to be language of the courts, and the judges of the courts were subject to the laws of the land though independent otherwise. An Advocate General was to be chosen by the State legislature, whose duty would be to observe whether the rule of law existed or not. The Advocate General had to appoint a subordinate cadre of pleaders to help maintain the rule of law. Independence of these pleaders was assured in the constitution.[3] All judges were to be subject to political directives as in the Stalin Constitution in the U.S.S.R.

The Constitution, in addition to spelling out the structural framework of the government, provides for the definition of nationality and the rights of nation, methods of election, organization of local government and the recognized languages for the future State of J & K. The Constitution promises freedom of conscience and religion for all citizens, irrespective of caste, creed and social status. It further permits organization of associations to all workers, youth, women and

1. *Ibid.* articles 21 and 22.
2. They number twenty-two.
3. *Ibid*, Articles 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44.

peasantry, and allows all citizens to form cultural, social and intellectual associations.[1]

On the pattern of the Russian Constitution *Naya Kashmir* envisages for citizens also duties which they would owe to the State. One of the foremost duties of the citizen is to defend his motherland from external aggression. Thus, military service is made compulsory under the Constitution, especially at the time of a national emergency. This duty entails the right that the State owe to the citizen. This right endorses that the State permits all citizens to be trained in arms and the use of arms.[2]

The Stalin Constitution of U.S.S.R. reads: "He who does not work does not eat."[3] Stalin himself considered work as a matter of honour, glory, valour and heroism. The future Constitution of Kashmir envisaged a similar position for its citizens. Job opportunity is promised by the State, but it is the duty of the citizen to work, and not to live as a mere parasite. He has the right to receive wages as laid down in the Constitution. He has the right to social insurance. The State, through its planning promises to provide opportunities for employment to every citizen. The means through which production could be increased are promised to be expanded to suit the improving economy. The Constitution asserts to overcome the hurdles in the way of full employment.[4] Thus, *Naya Kashmir* guarantees employment for all citizens.

The right to leisure is also guaranteed to the citizens on the pattern of the Russian Constitution, not dependent on the choice of the State but in accordance with the provisions of law. The Constitution also stipulates eight hours' work to labour, leisure and holidays on full wages and opening of health resorts for workers and peasants.[5]

1. *Ibid*, articles 2 and 4.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Andree Y. Vyshinsky, *The Law of the Soviet State*, the Macmillan Company, 1954, p. 204.
4. *Naya Kashmir*, n. 2, article 8.
5. *Ibid*, article 9.

In addition, old age pension, free medical aid, and other material amenities are guaranteed too. The Constitution also provides for a social insurance for all working class groups, in accordance with the principles laid down under National Insurance Scheme.[1]

The document promises to all citizens the right to education. It does not only foresee literacy for all but also education upto the University level. Free education is guaranteed upto first ten grades and scholarships to all deserving candidates studying in schools, colleges and universities, and free professional and technical education to the working classes.[2]

Women are also assured equality with men in economic, social, political and cultural rights, as also equal opportunities along with men, in all spheres of life. Their maternity interests, nurseries, for children and legal protection are also provided for. All children in the State are guaranteed all round growth and development without any discrimination arising from their parentage, place of birth, etc. The State has a duty to look after the children as a national asset and the Constitution provides for their medical aid and for their physical and mental development through appropriate legislation.[3]

The distinctive feature of the Constitution, which makes *Naya Kashmir* a socialist document, is its elimination of the institution of private property. It does not recognize the citizen's right to private property. The Constitution limits this right to property in accordance with the provisions and objectives laid down in the State plan. The relevant portion of it has two distinctive features : firstly, the main objective of planning is to restrict competition and institute a cooperative system in trade and industry ; secondly, to abolish all kinds of exploitation or production, that is, the result of exploitation.[4]

1. *Ibid*, article 10.
2. *Ibid*, article 11.
3. *Ibid*, p. 33.
4. *Naya Kashmir*, n. 2, pp. 53 and 54.

Articles 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32 deal with elections to various legislative bodies in the State, elections to all State and local institutions on the basis of adult franchise. It asserts that there shall be no discrimination in political rights on the basis of caste, creed, religion, literacy, or otherwise, property, past activities and the like. Only two groups are denied this right : (1) the unsound, and (2) those who are denied this right by law.[1]

The Constitution states that real power in the State vests in the people, living in villages, towns and cities, where people will have their own local bodies. In villages, Panchayats would be elected to function at the grass-roots level. These Panchayats in villages, tehsils and districts would be guiding the local economic, social and cultural planning. Panchayats are defined in the Constitution. They constitute executive, administrative and judicial systems to conduct business for the improvement of their areas. They would be responsible to their electors, and the Primary Panchayat had to be surbordinate to the tehsil, district and provincial Panchayats in their turn.[2] The Constitution recognizes seven languages as the languages of the State and declares Urdu as the State-level language. The Constitution also promises all languages due attention for development in due course. It lays down the basic principles for the improvement of a language as follows :—

(*i*) Establishment of an institution to promote languages, arts and culture ;

(*ii*) Encouragement to linguists to improve a language through—

(*a*) Improvement in its script,

(*b*) Rranslation from foreign languages,

(*c*) Research in languages,

(*d*) Initiating text-books and encyclopaedias in languages,

1. *Ibid*, pp. 42 to 44.
2. *Ibid*, articles 46 and 47.

(*e*) Scholarship for learning the language ;

(*iii*) Introducing state languages as the media of communication and broadcasting.[1]

Aspects of Economic Planning

Naya Kashmir document consists of fifty articles only. The last article (*i.e.*, Article 50) is the pivotal one. It is in essence a reiteration of the socialist principles of economy. It lays down that the economic life of the State shall be determined, conducted and regulated in accordance with the objectives of the State Planning, for which a State Planning Commission would be established. It aims at greater production, improvement in the standard of living and creating of capability for national defence.[2]

The article, under its sub-title "National Economic Planning", proclaims that the objective of the National Conference is to create a classless society, in which every individual shall have complete right to develop himself and enjoy a good standard of living by eradicating means of exploitation and providing equal opportunities for all. In this context, it states that the State will have, "Everything within democracy and everything in accordance with planned economy".[3]

The Constitution defines planning as the framing of such guidelines as the representatives of the people determine for the future economic and social improvement of the State. It provides that production, consumption, commerce and revenue be controlled on cooperative basis. This type of economy, according to the Constitution, is to have an impact on the cultural and spiritual life of people in the State. According to it such an economy brings forth a social order in which equality prevails.[4]

1. *Ibid*, article 47.
2. *Ibid*, n. 2, p. 50.
3. *Ibid*, p. 51.
4. *Ibid*.

The objectives of planning in the State are laid down as detailed hereunder :—

(1) National self-sufficiency, for the economic betterment of the people of Kashmir.

(2) Improvement in the standard of living within the framework of reconstruction programme. The standard being the same for all, it would not only be applicable to necessaries of life like food, housing and shelter but to all matters relating to public service. The national and public services include—

(a) Education : from primary to university education whether technical or non-technical,

(b) Health : Medical care and aid,

(c) Sanitation and hygiene,

(d) Transport and communication,

(e) Insurance, banking and credit,

(f) Production, which according to the Constitution means 'use' and not 'barter'. The principles accordingly, were designed to be flexible so as to suit the State economy. The example of a village is given, in which food and other necessities of life are to be exported or imported in a balanced system. This, however, would not mean self-sufficiency but balancing of national economy on the basis of village communes.[1]

The State planning has the objective of curbing competition and exploitation. Its aim is to evolve a cooperative method in the State economy. Thus, the *Naya Kashmir* Constitution aims at controlling business, agricultural activity and marketing of goods. The purpose of controlling marketing was to bring far-flung areas of the State at par with the areas easily accessible, and to link up productive and non-productive areas. The State Planning Council was expected to operate schemes for the State's economic development.[2]

1. *Ibid*, pp. 53 & 54.
2. *Ibid*.

The Constitution visualized a planned economic system and sought to ensure :—

1. Employment to all adult citizens,[1]
2. Right to work according to the capacity of the individual (both physical and mental),
3. Right to life and protection for children,
4. Respect for women in the context of their domestic and social life,
5. Removal of exploitation on the basis of superiority of intellect,
6. The National Conference—in conformity with Indian National Planning—accepted the measures that would assure a decent standard of individual life, and for this provided as under—
   (a) Nutrition : a suitable diet—with full complement[2] of vitamins—of two thousand and four calorific units,
   (b) Residential quarters, suitable for both winter and summer seasons. Each citizen is to be provided with a hundred square feet of living space, whether resident in village or in town,
   (c) Proper clothing : thirty yards of cloth for each citizen yearly, plus woollen clothes for winter,
   (d) Water supply : easy availability of clean drinking water of 25 gallons per consumer per day,
   (e) Lighting : adequate for a family in respect of cooking and heating,
   (f) Education for all as planned,
   (g) One hotel and restaurant for every thousand persons, with all possible amenities,
   (h) All areas (villages, towns, cities and hill areas) to be linked with the State capitals with telephonic and telegraph systems,
   (i) Insurance of a comprehensive nature for all citizens,

1. *Ibid*, p. 55.
2. *Ibid*, p. 56.

(j) One bank for every twenty thousand people, and
(k) Free medical aid.

For the implementation of these programmes the National Conference suggested creation of the "Kashmir Planning Commission", which would perform duties of the following nature :—

(a) Production—both industrial and agricultural,
(b) Transport—air, road and water,
(c) Distribution—markets, trade and commerce,
(d) Social Welfare—public health, education, housing, cultural and social matters, insurance, taxes, revenue and rights of women.[1]

Under the housing, "Production", the future Constitution declared Kashmir an agricultural country. Accordingly, it promised that it would be the duty of the Government to enhance the standards of living of the peasantry. It declared to bring about a green revolution by introducing the most modern techniques in agriculture, cattle-breeding, poultry, dairy-farming etc. It also envisaged revolutionary steps for improvement in afforestation, deforestation and forest products in the State. The following measures are suggested to improve the lot of the peasantry :—

1. Abolition of *chakdari* and absentee landlordism ;
2. Instituting cooperative schemes in the field of agriculture ;
3. Stoppage of smuggling in foodgrains from the State to areas outside.[2]

The 'Naya Kashmir' proclaims that the object of agricultural planning would be creation of congenial conditions for self-sufficiency in food in the State. The methods for achiev-

1. *Ibid*, p 58.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 60 & 61.

ing this are provided for in the Constitution under the following heads :—

(i) Establishment of an organisation to facilitate agricultural planning ;
(ii) Provision of hybrid seeds to the peasants ;
(iii) Establishment of drug research laboratories, and growing of herbs required in them ;
(iv) Improvement of available cultivable land by supplying fertilisers ;
(v) Stepping up of agricultural research ;
(vi) Cultivation of fallow land and its transfer in the name of cultivators preferably the land is intended to be distributed on the basis of the commune system ;
(vii) Improving cattle-breeding ;
(viii) Improvement of the living conditions of the Gujar community ;
(ix) Improvement in fruit industry and canning and supply of insecticides and pesticides ;
(x) Encouragement to bee-keeping industry ;
(xi) Encouraging silk industry ;
(xii) Development of fisheries ;
(xiii) Provision of timber to the peasantry and improvement of grazing lands.[1]

Agricultural planning requires the establishment of an agricultural council to implement the schemes. At every level—village, tehsil and district—small councils of this type are also envisaged. These councils are expected to implement the schemes in collaboration with the *Panchayats* of the respective areas. These councils would have the following duties to perform :—

(i) To guide agricultural cultivation ;
(ii) To run cooperative cultivation activities ;

1. *Ibid*, p. 64.

(iii) To oversee crop development properly and also to grade and transport fruit production ;
(iv) To finance the marketing of the commodities ;
(v) To disburse profits received from unions and cooperatives ;
(vi) To be custodians of all the moneys to be disbursed later ; and
(vii) To supervise the functioning of cottage industries.[1]

The hierarchy of these councils was to coordinate their functions with the National Council so that the rights of the peasantry be protected. These rights are guaranteed by the Constitution, and are listed hereunder :—

1. Right to a piece of land or, in its absence, some alternative arrangement ;
2. Right to own such land which at the time of enforcement of the new law was still the property of the landlords ;
3. Right to all necessaries of life, either from village or commune productions, or, otherwise suppliable by the government ;
4. Abolition of all levies received by *jagirdars* in lieu of their *jagirs* ;
5. Right to abolition of *Sahukari* debts ;
6. Right to insurance and the benefits thereof ;
7. Right to protection against floods, hailstorms, crop diseases, fire and damage to cattle ;
8. Right to receive modern technical advice on the following :—
   (a) Soil,
   (b) Gradation of crops,
   (c) Fertilizers and irrigation,
   (d) Drought and remedies for it,
   (e) Eradication of malaria,

1. *Ibid*, p. 65.

(f) Agricultural implements,
(g) Protection of crops,
(h) Godowns,
(i) Poultry,
(j) Fodder and animal husbandry,
(k) Sanitation ;

9. Right to proper transportation of foodgrains ;
10. Right to use of forests ;
11. Right to free medical aid ;
12. Right to sanitary-fitted housing and clean villages ;
13. Right to cooperative life and its amenities ;
14. Right to education.[1]

Economic planning would be incomplete if the Constitution would not provide for an industrial structure. Consequent upon economic planning, industrial planning is envisaged in the Constitution. It is also a deliberate and long list of schemes pertaining to industrial planning. To the drafters of the Constitution a progressive standards of living was the only objective underlying industrial production. It is production through which the fruits of the present age could be enjoyed.

The Constitution refers to the position of man *versus* machine, and states :—

> "In the event of man becoming the slave of the machine, giving the machine into a few hands, the objective underlying the industrial planning shall be destroyed. Machine would be a friend of man ; provided it is owned by the State. In a democratic form of government there is harmony between the people and the State. Machine could not be used to the disadvantage of one and the advantage of other, but for the fulfilment of the national demands and requirements."[2]

1. *Ibid.* pp. 66-70.
2. *Ibid*, p. 71.

Thus, the Constitution envisages the nationalization of all existing industries and the establishment of new ones in the public sector. To this end, it declares that the State Plan would devise the following methods to ensure State monopoly :—

(i) Abolition of industrial monopoly ;
(ii) All big and basic industries shall be owned by the State ;
(iii) Confiscation of all individual monopoly, whether formal or informal, by the State ;
(iv) All industries related to forests to be owned by the State ;
(v) Investments in small industries would be encouraged within the framework of the State Industrial Planning and under the State Industrial council.

The following guidelines are provided for the industrial planners to further the related schemes :—

(i) Necessary machinery,
(ii) Raw materials,
(iii) Technical and non-technical labour,
(iv) Nearness to markets.

The following industries are contemplated to be established :—

(i) Defence production,
(ii) Hydro-electric,
(iii) Power stations,
(iv) Coal, gas and kerosene,
(v) Metals and minerals,
(vi) Industrial and agricultural machinery,
(vii) Production of means of transport,
(viii) Machine tools,
(ix) Scientific instruments,
(x) Chemicals used for medicines,

(xi) Textiles,
(xii) Constructional and architectural requirements,
(xiii) Shoe manufacturing,
(xiv) Pharmaceuticals, and
(xv) Paper, etc.[1]

The Constitution sets up an organization to make industrial planning a smooth affair. The organization at State level is vested with power to guide its lower branches, and is named "National Industrial Council". District, tehsil and village councils are to work under it, and all such functionaries were to work in cooperation with the respective local *panchayats*. The National Industrial Council is assigned the following duties by the Constitution :

(i) To maintain the flow of industrial production,
(ii) To integrate the local needs with industrial out-put,
(iii) To make proposals for amending the plans on the basis of local experience,
(iv) To supply data for the National Planning Commission,
(v) To look after the industrial cooperative schemes in relation to cottage industries through special committees.[2]

Kashmir is known from ancient to the present times for its industrial products, fabrics, woollen and cotton textiles, fine silk, pashmina, smithy, pottery, glass manufacture and papier machie. The Constitution attributes this fame to the intelligence and technical sophistication of the workers and craftsmen live under conditions of starvation, poverty and lack of healthy surroundings. Consequently, it suggests the following steps for amelioration :

(1) To save the worker from exploitation by setting up cooperative unions,

1. *Ibid*, pp. 73-75.
2. *Ibid*, p. 76.

(2) To introduce workers to hand machines so that small industries are founded with the object of raising production. To further this objective the Constitution lays down three bases for cottage and small industries as was initiated in China on the advice of Professor J.B. Taylor.

The three basic principles are :

(i) Use of general commodities and their distribution,
(ii) Manufacture of machines for production,
(iii) Training for new methods of production.[1]

The industrial production is essentially dependent on transportation also, i.e., carriage of goods from one place to another. Lack of transport is considered as one of the major causes for the undeveloped economy of the State. Therefore, 'Naya Kashmir', stipulates improvement of transportation on the following lines :

(i) Connecting of Jammu and Srinagar cities with other cities, towns and villages in the State,
(ii) Connecting a village with its surrounding areas,
(iii) Rivers, lakes and other waterways to have the most modern water transport system,
(iv) Bridges of vital importance would be constructed,
(v) Travellers and visitors to have adequate travel facilities,
(vi) Adequate arrangement of buses,
(vii) Adequate arrangement for the carriage of goods and transport for hilly areas.[2]

To implement this programme, the Constitution establishes a "National Communication Council" with engineers and financial advisers as members. This council is envisaged to

1. *Ibid*, pp. 77-79.
2. *Ibid.*

implement the plans in coordination with the Industrial Council.[1]

Socio-educational Schemes

Naya Kashmir is a comprehensive document. In addition to other schemes, it provides for socio-educational schemes as well. In the social sphere the Constitution includes health, education, cultural organizations, insurance and rights of women. One of the fundamental duties of the State is to look after the health of all its citizens. To carry out health schemes a 'National Health Council' was to be established. It would consist of doctors, physicians and financial advisers. Its guidelines are detailed hereunder :

1. Every fifteen hundred citizens should have one doctor,
2. Every village should have one doctor and one first-aid centre,
3. Every district is to have one 'Indoor Patient Hospital', under the supervision of provincial hospitals,
4. Doctors, *hakeems*, nurses, compounders, medical assistants and related personnel would be trained in the State Medical College,
5. Eradication of diseases,
6. Educating people about matters connected with hygiene and sanitation,
7. Maternity aid for women,
8. Children' s health to be looked after,
9. Medical research on modern scientific lines,
10. Encouraging Unani and Ayurvedic systems of medicine,
11. Promotion of sports and physical culture,
12. Training of women for medical profession,
13. Ambulances for people living in far-flung areas, and
14. Village and city sanitation.[2]

1. *Ibid*, pp. 84-85.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 90 & 91.

The Constitution has an additional clause for the workers which reads as under :

1. State's responsibility to cater to the needs of the workers.
2. Ban on profit-making,
3. Basic needs (essential goods) of the workers, to be supplied through cooperatives,
4. Convenient distribution centres for workers,
5. Residential quarters.

Naya Kashmir declares education as pivotal for all schemes and essential for a just social order. Consequently it sets forth the following in relation to :

1. Establishment of a national university,
2. Organizing of research,
3. Provision for technical education,
4. Establishment of a statistical institute,
5. Establishment of industrial institutes,
6. Establishment of a State Institute to provide knowledge about their own culture, language and history to the people of the State,
7. Establishment of one college in each district,
8. Establishment of nursery, primary, secondary, high and higher secondary schools,
9. Mother tongue to be the medium of education in all schools,
10. Establishment of a network of libraries,
11. Propagation of 'Basic Education', and
12. Provision of facilities to women for all kinds of education.[1]

The Constitution further envisages the establishment of an organization for cultural and social uplift. It lays down that in order to encourage a common and composite culture in the

1. *Ibid*, pp. 93 & 94.

State, it is imperative to establish a "Cultural and Social Council". The following steps are to be taken to further the programme :—

1. Establishment of a radio station,
2. Establishment of a "National Film Industry",
3. Institution of sports clubs and stadiums,
4. Opening of recreation clubs,
5. Protection of archives and ancient monuments, and
6. Establishment of an organization to preserve art and culture.[1]

Finally, the document, presents a list of rights to be guaranteed to women. Women in *Naya Kashmir* are given a special consideration, as hitherto, they had been denied a status equal to that of men. The list includes women's political, economic, social, legal, educational and cultural rights. The comprehensive list of these rights is summarised below:—

(A) **Political Rights** :

1. Right to vote and contest elections,
2. Right to be consulted on all legislation or decisions with regard to women,
3. Right to employment, and
4. Establishment of a department to look into their grievances.

(B) **Economic Rights** :

1. Right to equal pay for equal work along with men,
2. Right to choose any profession,
3. Right to insurance of all kinds,
4. Right to absence from work at night,
5. Right to lighter work-load during maternity, and
6. Right to perform the duties of motherhood.

1. *Ibid*, p. 96.

(C) **Health and Motherhood Rights** :

1. Maternity aid and care,
2. Hospitalization during confinement,
3. Post-delivery treatment and care,
4. District-wise institutes for training nurses,
5. Maternity leave on full pay—six months before and six months after delivery,
6. Nursery schools attached to all factories and industrial complexes, where more than seven women work,
7. Right to half an hour's break for a mother who has to nurse a child, and
8. Mother having more children would have the right to a family allowance.

(D) **Social and Legal Rights :**

1. Legal protection (free legal advice and defence),
2. Abolition of immoral traffic,
3. A woman's right to choose her husband,
4. Abolition of the dowry system and immoral traffic,
5. Right to divorce,
6. Right to sustenance allowance for feeding children in case of divorce, and
7. Right to decent treatment for a woman under detention.

(E) **Educational Rights** :

1. Right to free education ; mobile schools for boat women and Gujjar ladies,
2. Special scholarships for technical education,
3. Segregated education system for women, except when they choose co-education,
4. Right of participation in meetings of bodies which frame courses for study, and
5. Provision for the 3 R's to all adult women.

(F) **Cultural Rights** :

1. Encouragement to women for scholastic pursuits,
2. Participation of women in cultural and literary activities,
3. Their participation in the development of the mother tongue, and
4. Their cultural renaissance.[1]

Reaction

'Naya Kashmir' had a profound impact both inside the State and outside. It invoked a very favourable reaction inside the State. For the National Conference and its leadership, it seemed to benefit two aspects of the freedom struggle. Firstly, it was a cohesive instrument for the National Conference leadership for political education ; secondly, the masses rallied round the party for the cause that was enshrined in it.

Nearly four years after the publication of the document, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah said, "Naya Kashmir is a vow which we contracted with the people of the State. To implement every principle, enshrined in it, is our sacred duty."[2] The document was used by the leaders of the National Conference as a weapon against all reactionary forces. Every leader, from Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah down to the lowest cadre utilized it as a weapon for political education. S. Budh Singh, a veteran National Conferencite, asserted that the document is the fundamental Constitution for the future of the State which promised a just standard of living for the masses of the State and which, in its fundamentals, abolished the prevailing inequalities of the time.[3]

1. *Ibid*, pp. 100-108.
2. S. M. Abdullah, *Presidential Address*, 1949, p. 19.
3. Budh Singh, *Prem Khilari* (Urdu), n.d., Jammu and Hindustan Press, p. 130.

In the introduction to *Naya Kashmir* document Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah asserted : "The future of 'New Kashmir' lies hidden in its political and economic concepts, and we prepared the scheme of 'Naya Kashmir' only to implement it".[1] He adds, "In so far as the economic boundaries are concerned, we have our economy based on national planning. Without national planning no improvement in economic Standards can be effected."[2]

At the sixth annual session of the National Conference, held on 3rd, 4th and 5th August, 1945, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah devoted cosiderable part of his presidential address to the elucidation of *Naya Kashmir* for purposes of political education. At the Conference meeting he declared that the document was not based on idealism but was the essence of the freedom struggle because all the resolutions passed from time to time and the avowed policies and decisions of the Conference were incorporated in it.[3]

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah thought that the impact of the publication of the document was far-reaching. He said at the meeting of the National Conference : "Naya Kashmir" document has weakened the government and created havoc in its ranks. At the same time it has reflected the strength of the movement and the ideas that actuate it."[4] He asserted that the document is the death-knell of the exploiters. However, he remarked, "A genuine criticism of the omissions in the document shall be accepted by the National Conference".

The document, after its circulation, had a profound impact outside the State as well. Mrs. Freda Bedi, admitting the strategic position of the State, praises the economic plan enshrined in the document and says that it shall have impact

1. S. M. Abdullah, *Introduction to "Naya Kashmir"*, n. d. Nishat Press, Srinagar, p. 23.
2. *Ibid.*
3. S. M. Abdullah *Presidential Address*, Nishat Press, August 1945, p. 8.
4. *Ibid*, pp. 10 and 11.

not only on the neighbouring States but also indirectly on many countries.[1]

Professor Smith, congratulates the National Conference for having prepared a historical document. Professor Hasan, an economist, also praises the Conference leadership for their far-sightedness in visualising the most complex problems of the time and for providing solutions to these in the document. He writes ; "I personally agree with the principles envisaged in the document, based on economic planning for the future of Kashmir."[2]

It is the ideas that move the world, and it is the people who are moved to revolution, rebellion and resistance. It is political movements that codify the principles for future guidance. The people of Jammu and Kashmir were moved by socialist urges in 1931 and continued to be moved uptil 1946. The document was the result of the same urge for freedom, and the movement was also the consequence of the ideas presented by different thinkers, poets and intellectuals.

The people react to revolutionary ideas very well. The people of Kashmir, thus, were not moved by the programme of 'Naya Kashmir' alone but also by the revolutionary ideas of Mahjoor, who sang :—

"Thee, worker and peasant unite,
Fight for your rights and do not beg and pray."
(to jagirdars)[3]

Let us, therefore, examine Mahjoor's revolutionary ideas, which moved Kashmiris to action.

1. *Naya Kashmir*, n, 2, p. 109.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 110 and 111.
3. Mahjoor, *Payan-e-Mahjoor* (Kashmiri), n.d., Ali Mohd. & Sons, Vol. V, p. 6.

CHAPTER FIVE

Revolutionary Ideas of Mahjoor

Contemporary Kashmiri Poetry

Azad[1] divides the history of Kashmiri language and literature into four periods. The first period is dominated by philosophical and mystic contours, shaped by Sheikh Noor-ud-din Wali and Lala Arifa. Depicting the age of Noor-ud-din Wali, Azad comments : "Sheikh's age was the age of height of feudalism. He was a rustic and did not only observe the tyranny perpetuated against tenants by the landlords but also experienced it. It was, however, not possible for him to break the chains of this system. The result was that he advocated a freedom struggle to relieve man of pains, sorrows and oppression."[2]

The second period starts with Haba Khatoon and ends with Mahmud Gami, and the third period is initiated by

1. Abdul Ahad Azad, a poet very well-known in Kashmiri Literature.

2. A. A. Azad, *Kashmiri Zuban Aur Shairi*, (Urdu), J & K Cultural Academy, Vol. I, p. 213.

Kutub-Din Waiz and ends with Abdul Gafar Darvesh. Historians generally call it as the medieval period. However, these latter two periods are noted for the themes of spiritualism and didacticism. Literary movements are only part of social and political life. Therefore, the medieval period, and even ancient period, could change the content of poetry, because politically the society then generally remained a feudal society.

Azad's period in the literary history of Kashmir virtually coincides with Mahjoor's, because this period is the "outcome of a conscious need for social and political freedom".[1] This period observed many changes : First World War with its repurcussions, and the Second World War with still further complicated fabric of social and economic life. Thus, the Kashmiri poetry of the time is the poetry of freedom. Kaumudi refers to this change as a new ground in contemporary poetry, and says : "There is less of love and romance in it and more of fact and reality. There is an effort to describe the trivial events in the lines of simple folk, as also their urges and emotions. This new phase of literature, a product of the accumulated experience of the past, also depicts the mental conflicts of the present era and the fond hopes and future dreams of a politically awakened generation."[2]

Contemporary Kashmiri literature begins a fresh and free outlook on national and cultural life according to Kaumudi. This change occurred as a result of two reasons. Firstly, the culmination of the world wars which ended with more internationalism, and secondly, too much of socialism and nationalism was in domestic life in the newly emerging states of Asia and Africa. Kashmir, in 1931, experienced the first revolt and witnessed a literary movement alongwith the liberation movement. As a consequence, contemporary poetry in Kashmir is replete with "political and economic problems" of the people.[3] Kaumudi says : "Much of the modern Kashmiri

1. Kaumudi, Kashmir : *The Cultural Heritage*, Asia Publishing House, p. 81.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid*, p. 80.

poetry centres round the political and socio-economic themes of the day. Today the best known poets of Kashmir come from the proletariate, who have sprung from humble circumstances. Their songs, therefore, breathe a free and revolutionary spirit as well as hold out a hope for the freedom of all classes."[1]

Mahjoor symbolizes this change in the contemporary Kashmiri poetry. He was the first modern poet to sound the new themes of revolution in this era. The change he visualized promised Kashmiris relief from the deep morass of slavery, oppression, suppression, tryranny and poverty. His songs, lyrics and poems threw a challenge to the common man, and the Kashmiri had no alternative but to rise at his call. This call was to change the destiny of the Kashmiri. The Kashmiri gave a befitting reply at his call and rose against the despotic rule in 1931.

Biography

Mahjoor was born in 1888 A.D. and died on 9th April, 1952. Born of a peer family known as "Peerzadas"—Mahjoor was destined to read, write and teach. 'Peerzadas' either belong to the Brahmin class who retained scholarship even after their conversion to Islam, or belong to such of the Muslim preachers' class as entered Kashmir with a view to spreading Islam and settling down here. Further, Amir Timur's onslaught on Turkistan made the Sayyids to flee from that area, and Kashmir Sultans cordially received them in Kashmir. These Sayyids from Turkistan wielded great influence with the Sultans of Kashmir, and as such they were granted *Jagirs*. Their main task was propagation of Islamic theology, worship and devotion.[2] However, these 'Peerzadas' lost their hegemony in due course because of economic backwardness and the degeneration of their descendants. Mahjoor is associated with the 'Peerzadas' of the same root

1. *Ibid.*
2. A. A. Azad, n. 2, Vol. III, p. 187.

as those of converted Brahmins. He himself never asserted to have belonged to Sayyids.[1]

From patriarchal lineage, Mahjoor was the son of Mir Ahmad of Sopore, who as a scholar arrived in Srinagar. Soon after, he had an association with the family of Sheikh Yaqoob Sarfi, a great Persian scholar, poet and religious preacher. Mir Ahmad, due to his intelligence and pursuit of scholarship, remained in the family as "Khanidamad", and later as heir. He lived at Khanqahi Muhalla in Srinagar. His third child, Peer Abdullah, died in the prime of his life, leaving a minor son, Peer Ghulam Mohiuddin. The latter was brought up by one of his maternal uncles, Sheikh Tabib Rafiqi, at whose bidding he migrated to village Nowbug in Tehsil Badgam. Religious preaching was his sole profession. Peer Abdullah Shah, third son of Peer Ghulam Mohiuddin, was married in a 'peer' family of Matrigam. The Peers at Matrigam had already achieved recognition in scholarship. The family, had in addition to many persian scholars, produced many a famous and good hand writers.[2] Amongst them the last such famous writer—who in a competitive test in hand-writing had stood first with Col. Mohan Singh—married his grand-daughter, Mrs. Sayeeda Begum with Peer Abdullah Shah. Mrs. Sayeeda Begum was well-versed in Persian literature. To this lady was born the revolutionary poet, Mahjoor Ghulam Ahmad.

Peer Abdullah Shah, the father of the poet, was educated under the system, prevailing during that time. The system was based on tradition-oriented schooling with religio-moral emphasis and some linguistics. His father, therefore, had inherited some knowledge of Persian and Arabic, with a good hand-writing. Hand-writing was considered to be one of the qualifications for any sort of education in those days. He also did religious preaching. As a consequence the father desired his son to be educated in like manner. He was taught Persian, Arabic and some grammar. Mahjoor was also

1. *Ibid*, p. 188.
2. *Ibid*, p. 189.

educated in theology, some linguistics and was put through rigorous exercises for the improvement of his hand-writing. Later, he was apprenticed to Khan Abdul Ali Ganai for improvement in what he had already achieved under his father. His father and teacher soon afterwards permitted young Mahjoor to join a school run by a Muslim organization, Nasratul-Islam, in which at the time primary education slightly in modern sense was imparted.[1] He had, however, to abandon education in Srinagar after a very short time.

During this time Sayyid Ghulam Mohiuddin of Layalpur (now in Pakistan) along with his son, Sayyid Abdullah Shah, L A.G. Entomological Agriculture, arrived in Kashmir and stayed with the Mahjoor family. Mahjoor got friendship with Sayyid Abdullah Shah and was invited to the Punjab, but being the only son of parents, Mahjoor was not permitted to go out. Once, in the absence of his father, he left Kashmir, reached Amritsar and stayed with Sayyid Mohiuddin. He was taken as apprentice under Katib Ghulam Ali and learnt the art of caligrapy. He learnt the art in six months only and started earning his living. Mahjoor was respected by Bismal (Molvi Abdullah)—a great prose writer in Urdu and Persian—for his intelligence and capability. Bismal negotiated his appointment with the editor of a newspaper, published in Lahore ; but when Fauq Mohammadud-Din published his newspaper, 'Kashmiri', Mahjoor associated himself with him, for he found Fauq intellectually superior.[2]

Mahjoor's visit to the Punjab brought him friendship with men of eminence in India and abroad. In India he had contacts with intellectuals in the Punjab, Delhi, U.P. and Bengal. His patron and guide, Bismal, introduced him to Shibli Numani, a versatile Urdu prose writer. Among others were great philosophers, writers and linguists.[3]

1. *Ibid*, p. 192.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 152 & 193.
3. Mr. Brown, author of '*A Literary History of Persia*' (in 4 Vols.) Alama Iqbal, Tagore, Maulana Habib-u-Rehman Khan Sheervani, Pt. Shiv Narayan, Late Shamim of Lahore High Court, Munshi Mohammad-ud-Din Fauq, Prof. Satyarthi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Pt. Anand Koul Bamzai and Abdul Ahad Azad.

Mahjoor returned to his native land in 1908. Religious preaching was the sole profession of his father, who desired his son to take up the same profession. His father had many disciples in Kashmir and in the Punjab. This profession did not suit Mahjoor's temperament, and he made his father abandon the idea. He had a progressive outlook and had broken away from traditionalism and orthodoxy. This made him to speak to his father to this effect :—

> "A strong and healthy Peerzada has no right to accept presents, charity and the like. How is the poor disciple to be compensated by the Peer ? After all, what is the form of livelihood which is secured without work ? I bid goodbye to such earning. I can earn myself. God has bestowed upon me scholarship and wisdom. Being in possession of these capabilities, I cannot roam about on the horse-back and live on exploitation.[1]

As a consequence Mahjoor accepted the job of a Patwari in the Revenue Department of the State. He got it in response to an advertisement by a Settlement Officer. His first appointment was made in the Ladakh circle of the State. However, it was against the wishes of his family that he proceeded to join his post in Ladakh. During his stay in Ladakh his father fell ill and passed away. Mahjoor returned home, overstayed his leave period to look after his family and was, consequently, put under suspension from service. This led to economic difficulties. After sometime he was reinstated on humanitarian grounds. He continued to serve as a Patwari uptill his retirement in 1943.

Mahjoor's whole life was lived under Dogra rule, except the last four years. Dogra princes were imposed on the people of Kashmir through the 'Treaty of Amritsar' which was signed on 9th March, 1846. Among other things, it gave independent sovereignty to Raja Gulab Singh over such

1. *Ibid*, p. 193.

territories and districts in his hills, "as may be made over to the said Raja by separate agreement between himself and the British Government with dependencies thereof, which may have been in the Raja's possession since the time of Maharaja Kharrak Singh."[1] On 16th of March, 1846, was signed the *Treaty of Amritsar* Under this Treaty the British recognised Gulab Singh as the Maharaja. He was succeeded by Maharaja Ranbir Singh, at whose death Maharaja Pratap Singh ascended the throne. During the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh, Mahjoor was born, and when Pratap Singh passed away in 1925, the poet was in the prime of his life. Maharaja Pratap Singh was succeeded by Maharaja Hari Singh, whose fall came in the wake of the freedom struggle in Kashmir, with which poet Mahjoor was in deep sympathy and association. He was fortunate to observe the course of the freedom movement through his association with it, and to see the fall of the Dogra Raj in 1947.

Mahjoor witnessed no improvement in the common man's lot during his life-time under the Dogra rule. Pratap Singh had achieved very little in the field of economy or in the standard of life of his subjects. "The lands remained uncultivated", writes Sir Walter Lawrence, "and the army was employed in forcing the villagers to plough and sow, and worse still, the soldiers came at the harvest time ... the share of the State was seized." P.N. Bazaz writes : "The people had deteriorated physically as well as intellectually. The cultural level of the valley had gone down considerably".[2] Poet Mahjoor was in the prime of his life, both physically and intellectually, to assess the rule of Maharaja Hari Singh, who succeeded to the throne in 1925. Kashmiris during his regime had to experience a new technique of suppression and Bazaz writes: "Indeed, under Hari Singh's rule, Kashmiris

1. *A Hand Book of the J & K State*, The Ranbir Government Press, Jammu, p. 20.

2. P.N. Bazaz, *The History of Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, Pamposh Publications, Delhi, p. 131.

began to be suppressed in many ways by the Dogras and had not been done before during the time of his predecessors."[1]

Thus, Mahjoor' s life was governed and influenced by the circumstances he was placed in. These circumstances were shaped largely by the Dogra rule which reflected itself in economic degeneration of the people caused by many factors. Mahjoor, as an officer of the Revenue Department, witnessed that the State had no fixed procedures and all taxes were collected at random. Revenue was also collected in kind. Mahjoor had the sharp-eye to observe that the army and the police collected the produce, leaving nothing with the cultivators. 'Begar' system of labour prevailed [2] The privileged class of land-holders exploited the peasantry under the very nose of Mahjoor. Muslims were not represented in the services and their contribution to decision-making was nothing. Mahjoor felt the lack of all freedom, and his political conscience did not permit him to be a silent observer. He studied, worked and composed verse for the revolution.

Poetic Genius :

Mahjoor was a born poet. His poetic genius burst forth when he was provoked to write a letter in verse to a learned friend in 1905. In the beginning he composed verse in Persian, later in Urdu, and finally in Kashmiri. When at Amritsar he met Shibli Numani, a versatile Urdu prose writer, the latter asked young Mahjoor, "What makes you Mahjoor?" The young man readily remarked, "Hazrat, my own land, Kashmir". Shibli Numani enquired from the poet if on his return to his native land he would change this name. The poet replied that he would not change the name (poetic name). He was further asked how he would be Mahjoor in Kashmir, the poet readily remarked, "Hazrat, from you".[3]

1. *Ibid*, p. 141.
2. *A Hand Book*, n. 14, pp. 28 & 29.
3. A. A. Azad, n. 2, p. 197.

From 1905 to 1923, Mahjoor wrote only in Persian and Urdu, and it was in 1923 that he decided to compose verse in Kashmiri. Poetry was intuitive for him, he did not compose. Azad refers to many instances when Mahjoor intuitively went on composing verse. Once Mahjoor fell ill and a close associate of his visited him. Soon the latter desired to depart. Mahjoor's susceptibility made him remark :

Unawares your arrival,
Fever of love's affliction,
Could'nt you tarry a moment,
To make redeem survival.[1]

Mahjoor's poetic genius made him famous both within and outside the State. Professor Devinder Satyarthi wrote about Mahjoor: "Mahjoor's ideas many times coincide with those of Tagore. It seems that at such coincidence, Mahjoor copies Tagore and vice-versa... When I entered Kashmir, I heard Mahjoor's lyrics sung on every side. I roamed in the streets of Srinagar and its environs ; and everywhere I heard his verses being sung. Consequently, I informed Tagore accordingly that Mahjoor is the poet in Kashmir and everyone recites his songs. No one has been so fortunate to have such fame in such a short time".[2]

Professor Devinder Satyarthi first came to Kashmir as a tourist when he was Director, All India Folk Songs Missions in 1927. During his tour he observed children and women singing in captivating tones. On enquiring he was informed that they were singing Mahjoor's poetry. He somehow arranged a translation of one poem composed by him (Mahjoor) and got it published in "The Modern View". Tagore read it and was so much impressed that Professor Satyarthi had to visit Kashmir again to contact Mahjoor for Tagore. Professor Satyarthi and Tagore had teacher-taught relation. The Professor stayed in Srinagar for sometime,

1. *Ibid*, p. 201.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 220 & 221.

collected Mahjoor's biodata and despatched it to Tagore along with the translations of some poems and lyrics. On some of the poems the remarks of Tagore were : "Your and my ideas are similar, and if you had known Bengali or English, I would say that these ideas ware borrowed from me. I am impressed by your poetry." Once Tagore called Mahjoor 'the Wordsworth of Kashmir'.[1]

Thus, Professor Devinder Satyarthi introduced Mahjoor to people outside Kashmir and the poet was acclaimed by all, within and outside the State. The intellectuals in Kashmir, who disdained their own mother-tongue, were convinced that Kashmiri language has the capacity to express all that can be called intellectual. Balraj Sahni also introduced Mahjoor to the Indian people through an English journal, 'Vishwa Bharti', as the people's poet in Kashmir. He wrote: "If Mahjoor composes a verse today, it is sung by the people within a fortnight. The children sing on their way to school, girls while harvesting the fields, boatmen while driving their boats, workers while they toil—i.e., one and all".[2]

Mahjoor had, by 1930 achieved recognition for his poetic genius and was heard and applauded at *Mushairas* (poetic symposium) within and out of the State. In 1934, he was invited to attend a Mushaira which was held in the Exhibition Grounds of Srinagar and convened by Choudhry Khushi Mohammad. He accepted the invitation on the condition that he should be permitted to recite a Kashmiri *Ghazal* as well. The request was acceded to with a counter condition that the poet should recite an Urdu *Ghazal* as well. Mahjoor's *Ghazals* were sung by Mahmud Shahri. Mahjoor got the greatest applause. Every Ghazal or poem sung on the occasion was hit song.

Mahjoor's poetry has such beauty of technique and a deeply romantic note that it moves the hearts of all Kashmiris. His poetry has the distinctive qualities of

1. *Ibid*, Vol. III, pp. 222-237.
2. *Tameer*, Srinagar, Lala Rukh Publications, Mahjoor Number, p. 18.

metaphor, diction, imagery, emotion, spontaneity and simplicity. His poetic sensibility and feeling as a Kashmiri excels that of most of the other Kashmiri poets. Consequently, his poetry proved to be life-giving for the people of Kashmir.[1]

The appeal of his poetry was so great that singers gladly desired to sing it. A party of singers was invited to give a programme of songs on the Exhibition Grounds at Srinagar. The leader of the party selected one or two *Ghazals* by Mahjoor because he had heard them sung almost everywhere. Gramophone recordings of Mahjoor's songs by Columbia Recording Company and Prize Trading Company, Peshawar, added to the fame of the poet. The first hit song of Mahjoor that was recorded was "Bagi Nishat ke Gulo"[2]. This proved to be the beginning of Mahjoor's emergence as a national poet of the Valley.[3]

Azad makes a comparative study of Mahjoor and Tagore as poets. He finds similarities between them, though at the same time he admits the greatness of Tagore. In Azad's view, Tagore freed Bengali verse from the clutches of Sanskrit and broke away from traditionalism. Similarly, Mahjoor freed Kashmiri poetry from conservatism and obsolete figures of speech etc. Both the poets gave poetry a musical form, and both broke away from the traditional techniques of verse. Therefore, both of them had to face critics in their respective States. Romance was common to both of them. Mahjoor liberated his language and literature from the domination of Persian and wrote and composed in the people's language as Tagore did. Both of them have clarity, simplicity and a local colour to suit the requirements of the people.[4]

Mahjoor's poetic genius reflected itself in a progressive outlook and attitude. Sir Niwas Lahoti wrote : "Generally

1. *Ibid*, p. 34.
2. A.A. Azad, n. 2, p. 213.
3. P.N. Bazaz, n. 15, p. 295.
4. A.A. Azad, n. 2, pp. 223 & 224.

speaking Mahjoor is a progressive poet". He studied Kashmiri and its various trends before him, and accepted only the good things in them. He rejected obsolete trends, and did not believe life to be mirage but a living and moving essence in things.[1] Mahjoor reached his poetic maturity in the post-1940 era, because he became more and more conscious of the socio-economic and political problems of his people. In his poetry, between 1940 and 1946, we find a new fervour with a new message for a new world.[2]

Right from 1927 to 1947, Mahjoor's poetic genius was responsible for stirring the feelings and emotions of the people. He made them move to achieve freedom and gave them the will to fight and struggle. He encouraged them to sacrifice their lives for the common cause. Mahjoor made them conscious of their socio-economic problems, feudalism and political slavery so that they could challenge the rules and create a new Kashmir. "Mahjoor's poetry, on the one hand prepared Kashmiris emotionally to act in the field of politics and, on the other hand, he widened the horizons of Kashmiri language", writes Amin Kamil.[3]

In the annals of Kashmiri poetry Mahjoor is the first great poet who considered it a self-deception to delve deep into the world of imagination. He rather used his genius to depict nature in the most lucid forms. Mahjoor, like Wordsworth speaks about meadows, groves, streams, rainbows, sunshine, birds. young lambs, cataracts, fields, land and lakes. gardens, flowers, vales, nightingale, stars, clouds, moon, fountains, brooks and channels. He loves Kashmir and everything, that is Kashmir, both in nature and spirit.

Mahjoor was conditioned by his own environment. His conditioning is reflected in his poetry, and within that compass he tries to fulfil the requirements of his age. This is a necessary condition for a good artist. However, one should not forget that the means for his self-expression is the *ghazal*

1. *Tameer*, n. 22, p. 21.
2. *Ibid*, p. 11.
3. *Ibid*, p. 25.

and *ghazal* has a capacity to express the hard realities of life.[1] Mahjoor could do justice to *ghazals*, and through it to the cause of Kashmiri language.

Mahjoor's poetic genius does not only touch romantic, moral and social aspect of a Kashmiri's life but political as well. He understands his past and draws the best from it. He shapes the present in the light of the changing world. Further, he builds a future in which there is no feudalism, despotism, class struggle or exploitation of any kind, and erects a State based on the spirit of brother-hood and love of a man for man. Love is the sovereign which reigns and rules the State. Let us, therefore, examine that aspect of his poetry which deals with politics and revolution.

Politics and Revolution

Mahjoor had deep understanding of the Kashmiri and his history. He had a sharp eye for the social system of which he was himself a part. On the one hand, he condemned the 'Sale deed' of 1846[2] and, on the other, he abhored the feudal system which sapped the life-blood of Kashmiris. That is the reason why Mahjoor sang :

"My Grand Papa was sold body and soul
for copper coins,
Coins were repaid, life they demand,
what a bargain."[3]

Mahjoor lived amidst a feudal system and could see through the evils of this system on account of his being a villager and a *Patwari*. As a revenue *Patwari* he moved through whole Valley, associated with the down-trodden

1. *Ibid*, p. 48.
2. Known as the 'Treaty of Amritsar' of 1846, entered into by Gulab Singh and the British Government, selling out the State to the former for seventy lacs of rupees in terms of Nanakshahi.
3. Mahjoor *Payame-Mahjoor*, Vol. V, n. d., p. 11.

Kashmiri who was suppressed by the administration and hated by all those who governed. That was the reason Mahjoor sang :

"My poor and naked, toil and feed the rich,
The same poor beg their livelihood before the rich."[1]

Feudalism is associated with peasantry which constitutes the largest section of the population. Mahjoor dissects the social evils of this class, evils which result from the slavery of Kashmiris. They were subjected to ruthless tyranny. Mahjoor sometimes warns them, at other times threatens them and finally strikes optimistic note. For instance, in one of his poems he sings :—

"Oh, worker and peasantry, unite,
Seek rights, leave begging and praying (to Jagirdars)."[2]

To eradicate social evils Mahjoor exhorts the peasantry to :

"Stand to break the chains of obsolete customs
and conventions,
Come out to fight them fearless like a warrior."[3]

While striking the optimistic note for the peasantry in "Gris-sund Gara", Mahjoor says :

"Be not melancholic, brother rejoice,
We shall soon be free,
Freedom shall bring prosperity
We shall soon be free".[4]

Mahjoor abhored poverty and foreign rule. He disdained the poverty of Kashmiris, because he believed that it was imposed on him by the foreign ruler and the wealthy. In

1 *Ibid*, Vol. IV, p. 8.
2. *Ibid*, Vol. V, p. 8.
3. *Ibid*.
4. *Ibid*, Vol. VI, p. 11.

the poem, "Gris-Sund-Gara", he expresses the sorrows of the peasantry. He describes how a peasant and tiller of land ploughed and without having two meals a day, and in autumn the tyrant landlord, would deprive him of the fruit of his labour. To foreigners he talks in the following words :

"Let them try our ego,
Let them try many a time,
We shall prefer death
To bow our head before a foreigner."[1]

A Kashmiri was symbolized by Mahjoor, as a bulbul (Nightingale) and Kashmir as a cage. In the cage, the Kashmiri was imprisoned. This theme was presented by him in his well-known composition, "*Firyade-Gul*" (the Flower's complaint). Symbolically, the poem represents his political ideas. To Mahjoor the bulbul represented the Kashmiri confined in the four walls of white marble (snowy mountains around the vale of Kashmir), complaining to the gardener of the oppression and tyranny perpetrated against him. The bulbul complained of his weak make-up amongst the dwellers of the garden and conveyed that the birth of the garden coincided with his own birth. He remarked that he (bulbul) loved all kinds of flowers and desired of him to deeply study old tales and know, how he had sacrificed his life for them. However, the bulbul notes it with regret that he had witnessed more tragedies in the garden than any good days. There had been only some brief intervals of happiness. "After such an interval there was a sudden attack and aggression, in which the aggressor incessantly shot arrows and a blood-bath was let loose in the garden. Many speechless creatures were killed but some bulbuls hid themselves in the grooves and ravines and some fled to the jungle. The nests were burnt to ashes and flower plants uprooted. This aggressive army retreated with the lapse of time, some plants again germinated

1. *Ibid*, Vol.V, p. 10.

and some bulbuls revisited the garden."[1] But then locusts arrived. The garden was again converted into a dreary desert, and once again it recovered. The process of hide and seek between the outsiders and insiders continued. "Once again, plucking men, arrowmen, floods and hailstorms jointly attack the garden and a new situation arises."[2]

Mahjoor adds that spring once again sets in. The birds from foreign lands arrive, they relax and enjoy the meadows, grooves, streams, sunshine, rainbow, birds, young lambs, cataracts, mountains, fields, lakes, springs, May mornings and sun-sets, vales, flowers, clouds and all that constitutes Kashmir. The bulbul provides the foreigner all kinds of hospitality. The latter's motives change and they stay permanently—to rule. The perpetuation of their rule was destined to destroy the nests of the natives. The foreigners strike up new tunes and music and intoxicate the gardener. The gardener refuses to recognize his bulbul, who also learns new language but, fortunately, it neither changes its form nor the name. Some hawks and kites enter the garden and sow the seeds of discord. Bulbuls start a dispute, the flowers are plucked. The bulbul rests in the trees and the cats watch from below.[3] The birds from foreign land erect fine nests (palaces) in trees like chinars and devdars. The bulbul watches everything helplessly. Thus, Mahjoor symbolically describes the history of Kashmir and makes the gardener lament the destruction of his garden in the following words :

"Today, Mahjoor as Bulbul sings a different tune,
Gardener, he hears, shall reply soon."

The poet laments further :

"Oh, kind gardener, listen thee to my tale,
Bulbul am I, weak amongst the birds of the cage.

1. A.A. Azad, n. 2, pp. 265-267.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*

Dwelt I here, since the garden was laid,
Grew flowers, since then; I with them played.
Flowers of different species and colours,
Loveth all of them, sang around them.
Flower and Bulbul are but couple of old creation,
Read old tales, they are born for each other.
Hear, what I observeth in the garden,
No comforts, mere sorrow, hard and barren life.
Spring set in, it blossometh, it dresseth in beauty,
Spring decorateth this bride (garden) in her all beauty.
Bulbuls in concert sang around it,
They beat the drum all to sound it.
Thus, Bulbul and the flower hath hemlock drunk,
When a crowd attacks with arrow and bow.[1]

Mahjoor, writes P. N. Bazaz, had patriotic fervour in his poetry. He loved Kashmir, its lakes, rivers, gardens, trees, forests, snow peaks, shrines, mosques, traditions, customs, birds, animals and even deserts and stones. He loved workers, labourers, peasantry, women, artisans and all. According to P.N. Bazaz, Mahjoor rises to the heights of eloquence in his poem—"Our Country is a garden" (on patriotism) :

The Bulbul sings to the flower;
Our Country is a garden.
In this our lovely garden
Flowers, bloom and bloom
Wafting abroad their fragrance.
See the flush of the bloom
In orchards, woods and glades,
The Bulbul gazes fondly
And has his thrill of joy.
    Vikram and Tekabatane
    Have early come to bloom,
    And buds are bursting everywhere
    The hyacinth says to the violet,
    Why dost thou hide thyself?

1. *Ibid.*

Leave the wooded highlands,
Come down to the fields below.
The spring has filled with symphony,
Fountains, brookes and hill streams,
Hills and water falls
To fields, hills and open woods,
To hollows, glens and meads—
What glow imparts the bloom.
On all sides pinnacles of snow,
Like marble ramparts stand,
Around a green emerald.
The Bulbul dotes on roses,
On marcissuses the bee,
Drunk with the joy of his native-land,
Is the Kashmiri.
Our native land, O, Mahjoor,
Is verily a lovely garden,
We must love it dearly
We all must love it dearly.[1]

Mahjoor does not hide his love of his country. He desires his countrymen to love their motherland in the like manner. He sings forth :

With all secrecy—my heart bursts out,
The same way as the scent wafts out of flowers.

And then adds :

"Heard the boy serves the wine of patriotism,
That is why I prepared new pots for it."[2]

In his poem "*Own Garden*", Mahjoor asks his countrymen to understand their own country and its people. He sings :

Why don't you observe flowers,
To understand thine garden?

1. Kaumudi, Kashmir : *Its Cultural Heritage*, n 3, p. 86.
2. *Tameer*, n. 22, p. 43.

Thee is garden, thee gardener,
Understand thine own garden.[1]

There are many more poems and lyrics which describe his passion for his country which are not quoted here on account of longevity.

According to P. N. Bazaz, Mahjoor was a votary of Hindu-Muslim unity. He detested communalism. He repeatedly paid emphasis on religious harmony, which is a sacred trust for all Kashmiris, right from the past. Love of man was Mahjoor's passion but Mahjoor was threatened with serious punishment at the hands of the authorities for composing the poem, though he finally escaped unmolested. The poem is :

Arise, O, gardener,
Let there be a glory in the garden,
Once again.
Let roses bloom again.
Let bulbuls sing of their love again.
The garden in ruins,
The dew in tears.
The roses in tattered leaf—
Let roses and bulbuls be kindled anew with life,
The wailing avail thee not, O, Bulbul,
Who will set thee free ?
Thy salvation thou has to work.
With thine own hands alone ;
Birds of the garden are full of song,
But each one strikes his own note ;
Harmonize their diverse notes,
O, God into a rousing song,
If thou wouldn't rouse this habitat of roses,
Leave toying with Kettle-drums,
Let there be thunder-storm and tempest,
Yes, and earthquake.[2]

1. *Payame-e-Mahjoor*, Vol. IV, p. 5.
2. P. N. Bazaz, n. 15, p. 297.

For Mahjoor all Kashmiris belong to the same stock and he loved religious harmony. He sang :

Who is the friend and who the foe of your (native) land ?
Let you among yourselves thoughtfully make out.
The kind and stock of all Kashmiris is one ;
Let you mix milk and sugar once again.
Hindus will keep the helm and Muslims ply the oars ;
Let you together row (ashore) boat of this country.[1]

. . . . . .

Listen to Mahjoor, and thou will get the clue to highest priest ;
The right knowledge is wisdom which does not rest with truth.

All Kashmiris are one and have for centuries held the opinion that "fellow-feeling alone is the worth of a human being". Mahjoor sings :—

There I beheld both Hindus and Muslims bend
their heads before the one ... (Reality) ;
What better news of "the city of love" should I
report to thee ?[2]

Mahjoor was not a socialist but he preached socialism. He did not profess socialism as a creed but it was in his bones. His whole poetry is almost the expression of his inner and outer selves. Socialism was to him an experience which emanated from his environment and he was not devoid of a sense of politics. He was very much politically conscious and did not, therefore, hide his experiences and feelings. Socialism to him was a reality, a reality that was to be told about. He found class distinctions and class wars around him, and, hence, he wanted capitalism to go. He foresaw the withering

1. Kaumudi, n. 3, p. 87.
2. *Ibid.*

away of the State and predicted the emergence of a classless society. That is why he sang :

"The charities are granted by the rich to gain heavens,
The heavens are insured by religiousmen for their own sake.
I received in barter tea and snuff for gold and silver.
I understand that aliens control my markets.

. . . . . .

The days are close, the darkness shall recede into light,
In the moon hills shall gleam."[1]

In disdain of capitalism he sang :

None shall forgive him (the poor) the theft
committed for self-preservation ;
The rich kills thousands, spending for the commission.[2]

Mahjoor's poetry is full of revolutionary ideas, because he was against alien rule, capitalist economy, feudalism and other social evils — as discussed earlier. Consequently, he desired revolution, a revolution which would change for the better the overall life of the Kashmiris. The revolution would end all exploitation and all forms of exploitation. Therefore, he wished Kashmiri to rise at his call. According to P.N.K. Bamzai, Mahjoor in simple Kashmiri voiced the inner urges and feelings of the peasantry and exhorted them to rise and work for a change.[3] To this purpose the poet tried to rouse the workers and the peasantry in the manner :

"Be conscious, my starving worker,
Stand against the tyranny, it rendered you useless,
Stand you are deadened by poverty,
Stand, how long to be under tyranny and slavery.

1. Mahjoor, *Payame-e-Mahjoor*, Vol. IV, p. 8.
2. Mahjoor, *Kalam-i-Mahjoor*, Vol. X, p. 15.
3. P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir : Political, Social, Cultural*, Metropolitan Book Co, Ltd. Delhi.

Stand, it is dawn, the sun of revolution has risen,
Your burnt garden shall regenerate, spring bath this message."

Revolution is the essence of life and is the instrument of a change for a better world and better future. To this end people must fight. Mahjoor played an important role in deepening the political consciousness of Kashmiris. Amin Kamil writes about Mahjoor in this context : "On the one hand, he stimulated the national sentiments and feelings to act in the manner as were necessitated by the struggle movement and on the other he broadened the domains of Kashmiri language and literature".[1] In these words he calls to the nation :

Come out, come out, Kashmiri,
Show thy chivalry,
Come out, come out, Lions grave,
Show thy chivalry,
Bravo, Bravo show thy chivalry.
Peaks of mountains you confront,
Run them over like a lion.
Surmount the mountain peaks,
So that your pace is not retarted
To show thy chivalry.
Lion grave you confront,
Run them over like a lion,
Surmount the mountain peaks,
So that your pace is not retarted
To show thy chivalry.
Lions grave you confront,
Attack them to fall on the ground,
Run, catch and devour them,
So that none is tyrannical,
Show thy chivalry.

1. *Tameer*, Amin Kamil, n. 22. p. 25.

Speed up, speed up,
Think every moment,
Accompany the flag,
Hoist it high and higher,
To show thy chivalry.

Mahjoor calls for war. He desires a war against the oppressor and the exploiter. In his view the time had come for a fight against the ruler. Therefore, he wants his countrymen to :

Sing the song
Drink the wine
Run and jump
Bravo run up.
Come out to become a fighter
To write the Rustum's tale,
Become the lion of the jungle,
Hide and attack and move ahead.
Move not aimlesss, become a soldier,
Handle a gun and a machine gun,
Awake your own countrymen,
To name, name it for ever.
Like heaven is your motherland,
Jealousy breeds in your enemies,
Run after these vicious men,
Suck, suck, suck their blood.
Be not afraid of thy enemy,
Be ready every moment,
Fit your girdles with the flag,
Fast, fast, fast thou run.
Chivalry of a Kashmiri,
Warriors skill of Tazabatani,
Defeat of Akbar's army,
Remember, remember along.
Recite the songs of Mahjoor,
Be found of it to be brave,

Thou shall enrol in liberation army,
Sing, sing and sing on.[1]

The poet instils the spirit of revolution in the people by inciting them the fight against the despotic ruler in spite of all the geographical limitations imposed on them by the Valley. He wants them to be courageous and self-confident, in fighting all odds. He, therefore, sings :

There is a tumult amongst the birds (of garden),
A new tune is struck by golden oriole in the cage.

. . . . . .

The bees (in Spring) move far off to feed,
The sky is overcast, they buzz in their frames.

. . . . . .

I remained in the cage throughout my life,
I have the strength (still) in my wings to fly.

. . . . . .

The hawk does not habitate, it soars high,
It seeks livelihood on peaks of hills.

. . . . . .

Rivulets that flow, mark their origin,
The origin is calm, the flow is tumultuous.

. . . . . .

The rich are afraid to lose their life and wealth.
The poor are proud of courage and chivalry.[2]

. . . . . .

They (despots) are crazy, they sharpen the arms of tyranny,
The chains of slavery shall rust the scissors of tyranny.[3]

Mahjoor's revolution is spontaneous and he did not hide his feelings. The poet was blunt in asking the oppressor to quit, and wrote :

Tell them to grant us freedom,
Convey them to relieve us,

1. *Ibid*, p. 6.
2. *Ibid*, Vol. V, p. 15.
3. *Ibid*, p. 10.

Tell them it is proper for us,
To look after our own houses ;
Let them leave this country.

Revolution breeds hope, and hope visualizes a better future. Mahjoor was, consequently, hopeful about the future of Kashmir after revolution. He was confident that oppression and poverty would end. That is the reason he strikes an optimistic note in these lines :

When the sun of the new world shall rise,
Thy balcony shall be first to go to the glow,
The rest of the world shall glisten later.[1]

Mahjoor, like Shelley, "saw in the established institutions, in kings and priests all the diverse forms of evil and obstacles to happiness and progress. His imagination took wing towards the new world which would come into existence when all these forms of error and hatred had disappeared."[2] The essence of Mahjoor's work in his prophecy of a new born age like Shelley was the spirit behind the "New Kashmir" transmuted by a lyric ordour. Mahjoor visualized a New Kashmir and its spirit in independence and self-government. The Bulbul is free to develop in such a State. Such a State has no error and hatred so that Kashmir, after a long period of slavery, changes into an independent and sovereign society. Both the posts visualized a revolution before the "New World" could be created. Both of them had similar aspirations about the future and equally hopeful :

Be the trumpet of a prophecy ; O, wind,
If winter comes, can Spring be far behind ? (Shelley)

and

Winter will vanish, snow shall melt, spring will come again,
Mahjoor, be ready with the symphony of love,

1. Kaumudi, *Kashmir : Its Cultural Heritage*, n. 3, p. 89.
2. Emile Legouis : *A short History of English Literature*, Oxford Press, p. 288,

Flowers will bloom of their own accord,
Let thee just become an apparent cause.[1] (Mahjoor)

Note how Mahjoor visualizes the future and warns the oppressor in these words :

"Enjoy the opulence for a day or two,
Soon thou shalt have to face the flood (of democracy)
People will then reside in your drawing room.
Listen, therefore, to the (voice of) reality ;
Be in tune with the (changing) times."

And when the happy era commenced, Mahjoor recalled :

Thou wert warbling (notes) inside the cage . . .
There was the stammer of slavery in the voice ;
Forget those old tales now, sing fresh strains ;
Congratulate the flowers and disport (thyself) in the garden.[2]

. . . . . .

The days of tyranny are no more, just time has dawned,
To obsolete world has gone, prepare for the new world.

Mahjoor, in his poem, "*Gris-sund-Tarana*" touches the height of optimism when he refers to the peasantry in the following words :

Be not melancholic, brother, rejoice,
We shall soon be free,
Freedom shall bring prosperity,
We shall soon be free.
We ploughed this land,
We all members (family) laboured hard,
We drank (only) water and ploughed hard,
But we shall soon be free.

1. P. N. Bazaz, n. 15, p. 297.
2. Kaumudi, n. 3, p. 89.

Mahjaor makes you conscious,
Darkness shall fade, and it shall dawn,
Master tells you the truth,
We shall soon be free.[1]

Mahjoor made his people conscious about the coming new world. For him, future was spring in which flowers bloom. He directed his countrymen to come out to enjoy. He sings :

"Look oriole, winter is over, Spring hath set in,
The flowers (different colours) have blossomed,
enjoy the garden.
You were born in cage, you lived there through life,
Now learn thee to fly fearlessly in the skies,
The hawk left the garden, the birds were freed,
If you also turn hawk, no difference.[2]

The poet pined for a new world in which a new Bulbul, new wines, a new *Saqi*, a new sky, a new dawn and a new dusk would prevail. This desire he embodies in the following words :

(I desire) A new flower, a new Bulbul, a new garden,
New wines, new Saqi and fresh intoxication.
(I desire) A new universe, a new sky, a fresh ray,
New dawn, new dusk, and a fresh world.
The system of governments obsolete in the world,
I wish new law, a new office and a new legislature.
.....
The poor cannot get a pomegranate to feed his
many patients,
The rich desires one patient for hundred
pomegranates.[3]
.....

1. Mahjoor, *Payame-e-Mahjoor*, Vol. VI, p. 11.
2. *Ibid*, Vol. V, pp. 11 and 13.
3. *Payame-e-Mahjoor*, Vol. III, p. 1.

Today, I convert dreary deserts into flowery beds,
So far I hath converted flowery beds into dreary deserts.

.....

The Bulbul is happy, for winter is over,
And the Spring has set in,
The breeze in March greets some one to come in.

Mahjoor's new world is the world of economic content, equality and freedom, religious tolerance, love and self-confidence. So he sang in the poem :—

Listen to me, my 'Lalo', (beloved)
I shall tell thee the tale of love ;
I ran to cities, towns and every place,
Morning, evening, every time.
Ran like a madman ;
Listen to me, my 'Lalo',
I shall tell thee the tale of love.
I ran after *Pirs* and *Jogis*,
Seers, *faqirs* and astrologers,
Left no shrine without visiting
Listen to me, my 'lalo',
I shall tell thee the tale of love.

.....

Your dreary deserts shall no more be deserts,
A new world shall rehabilitate itself,
Deserts shall convert to garden,
Listen to me, my 'lalo',
I shall tell thee the tale of love.
Bulbul shall rule over,
Falcon shall have to obey
Hawks shall be your guards,
Listen to me, my 'lalo'
I shall tell thee the tale of love.

.....

Flower shall have its excellence,
Bulbul shall impose fee for songs,
Very soon you shall see the time,
Listen to me.....
    Thorns shall guard the garden,
    Shall keep the arrows in hands,
    So flowers are not plucked,
    Listen to me, my.....
Kites shall not harm any species,
Shall not take interest in flesh,
Shall all (kites) be ascetic,
Shall pick up grains,
Listen to me, my 'lalo'.....[1]
    The thorny poisonous bush, (Arkhal)
    Shall get a graft of the pine,
    The willow shall get the durability of sandalwood.[2]
    All shall be in unison,
    Listen to me, my 'lalo'.....
Thy hills shall bear precious stones,
Thy hill ranges shall yield gold,
Divers shall detect rubies in the Dal,
Pearls shall emerge out of the Wolar,
Listen to me, my 'lalo'... ..
    The rich and the poor, weak and the strong,
    Shall not persist, equality shall prevail,
    Man shall turn humane,
    Listen to me, my 'lalo'.....
Religious men shall loose their argument,
Shall be at war with each other,
Religion shall only remain a symbol,
Listen to me, my 'lalo'.....
    Thou art a devotee of a Mandir,
    Come out to sow the seed,
    That is also a place of worship,
    Listen to me, my 'lalo'.....[3]

1. Mahjoor, *Payame-e-Mahjoor*, Vol. III, p. 8.
2. Kaumudi, n. 3, p. 89.
3. Mahjoor, *Payame-e-Mahjoor*, Vol. III, p. 8.

Independence from princely rule brought for a Kashhmiri freedoms which Mahjoor projected in his poem, "Freedom", in the words :

Bulbul, enjoy the freedom,
Enjoy flowers, relax in flowery places,
Leave thy cage, come thee out,
Enjoy flowers, relax in flowery places.

.....

Thou spoke in cage,
(But) thou were afraid to speak,
Now speak and speak,
Do not fear
Enjoy.....
Thee had supplies in the cage,
Now thee shall collect grains,
In all the fields ,
Less you may eat,
But shall be free,
Enjoy flowers, relax in flowery places.
Thee sang effective songs,
Free birds were fond,
Thy slavery made you stutter,
How long shall thee scroll the wings,
Unscroll the wings to fly in worlds,
Gaze freely on flowers,
Enjoy flowers. . . . . .
Unaware of the garden's affairs,
Many new flowers blossom,
Forget the past, sing a new tune,
Enjoy flowers. . . . . .

Mahjoor found freedom for himself also in the New World. He thought that he was free to compose verse of his choice in unambiguous terms. So he sang :

Mahjoor unchain the chains of slavery,
Now thee are free and free,

Thine heart is thy master,
And its slave is your tongue,
Enjoy flowers . . . . . .[1]

The verse of Mahjoor, writes Kaumudi, "embody the spirit of New Kashmir's struggle for freedom and emancipation. Mahjoor inspires his suffering countrymen with the promise of a happier world when the gardens be in full bloom and the lot of the people would be free from misery and unhappiness."[2] It was this hope of the New World that was enshrined in the document of *Naya Kashmir* in 1944, which was reviewed in fourth chapter. Mahjoor was the peoples' poet who associated himself with the course of common Kashmiri, composed for them and worked for them.[3] He associated himself with the freedom movement and used his faculties of mind and heart to inspire his suffering countrymen. His aspirations were embodied in *Naya Kashmir*, in which planning, rights of women and freedoms, etc. were incorporated. In the poem '*Kashmiri Women*' which is sung by all women on all festivals and at all places, Mahjoor exhorts us to give women her full rights and thus bring her bloom of life. These rights for women are incorporated in the document of 'Naya Kashmir'.

Mahjoor was one of those few revolutionary poets who could taste the fruits of revolution. It is the concept of revolution in his poetry because of which he was considered to be the peoples' poet. He was the voice of the people, and his lyrics and poems were sung and are sung by all. The peasant in the field, the worker in a mill or factory, the labourer in high hills and women of all ages sing his songs.[4]

Mahjoor was a great revolutionary poet of Kashmir, but with him stands another poet, A.A. Azad, who was an equally great poet because of his revolutionary ardour and socialistic

1. Mahjoor, *Payame-Mahjoor*, Vol. IV, p. 11.
2. Kaumudi, n. 3, p. 89.
3. Sri Niwas Lahoti, n. 22, p. 18.
4. Habibullah Hamidi, n. 22, p. 46.

ideas. "Azad's life started and died out within the shadows of Mahjoor. Leaving aside the romanticism in Mahjoor, he imbibes the freedom movement with emotion, respect, self-confidence and zeal, which are the characteristics of this movement. With all the revolutionary fervour, Mahjoor is full of humility."[1] Azad, on the other hand, was not humble to the extent of Mahjoor. He was a revolutionary of a Marxist type and a socialist in the Marxist style. Azad keeps his head high when he sings :

"I chewed steel, braved fire, drank own blood,
So far I did not bow but before thee".

Azad was committed to both—revolution and socialism, as we shall examine in the Chapter that follows.

1. M.Y. Teng, p. 22, p. 33.

CHAPTER VI

Socialist Ideas of Azad

Biography :

According to Dr. Kaumudi, "Of the more recent times, mention may be made of A. A. Azad and Mahjoor, whose songs and verses have been characterised by deep love for the motherland as well as joy in nature's colourful phenomena" ; but "love is not the consuming passion of Azad. He is capable of great heights, and invoking through the despair of love, a dynamic message for action and revolution".[1] Azad is something more—he is a socialist as well.

Born in 1903, Abdul Ahad Dar Azad lived and died as a school teacher. Son of one Mr. Sultan Dar, Azad lived in village Ranger, Tehsil Badgam, in Kashmir. Azad's father was well-versed in Persian, Arabic and Muslim theology. He had thorough knowledge of Islam. Dr. Padam Nath Ganjoo, one of the poet's close associates, writing after Azad's death, remarks : "My father was a *sufi*, accordingly, in response to his accentricity, he desired me to be a *sufi* but how could it

1. Kaumudi, *Kashmir : Its Cultural Heritage*, Asia Publishing House, 1956, p. 50.

be, because nature desires every individual to act in accordance with his potentialities.[1]

Azad was taught Arabic and Persian by his father, and was later admitted to a Maktab run by his brother, Ghulam Ali. Thus, at a very early age—he learnt not only the three R's but languages as well. In due course of time he found himself deeply in love with language and literature. He admitted this fact to one of his associates with the remark: "The study of literature was my passion and my hobby".[2]

Azad reached the age of sixteen when Europe was experiencing the ravages of World War I. The inflation in Europe had brought about a new dimension in economic relations. It had its impact on British India. The Second World War further aggravated the situation. Kashmir, however, gave rise to a class of upstarts, who became the 'Elite' and thus joined the class of exploiters. Azad had already experienced and felt that his society was sapped by the feudal virus. In addition, he observed the new stratifications made to exploit the common man as much as it could be possible.

Azad started active life in 1918 when he joined government service under the Dogra regime at the age of sixteen. He was appointed a teacher in a primary school at Zohama, just in the vicinity of his native village. Soon after he interested himself in Kashmiri language and literature. Along with Kashmiri he had specialized in Persian, Arabic and Urdu. In Kashmir, about 1918 and even today, a teacher in a primary school is expected to teach Elementary History, Geography, Mathematics, languages and nature study. Azad took up these subjects and became an ideal school teacher. Later, he appeared in Persian examinations of the Panjab University, Lahore, and passed Munshi (Proficiency in Persian) examination with distinction.

About Azad, Dr. Padam Nath Ganjoo, his biographer, remarks: "The late Azad was a man of eloquence and a man

1. *Kulyati-Azad*, edited by Dr. P.N. Ganjoo, J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar, 1967, p. 35.

2. *Ibid*, p. 36.

of understanding. He was thought-provoking and intelligent but he was devoid of perfect health. He always remained ill on one or the other score. A man of moderate size, his face was black but he was serious. His eyes reflected depth. He would maintain moustaches but shaved off the beard. His dress was simple but clean, with a white turban on his head. He was shy and, consequently, spoke little. However, in the company of his friends, his words converted all to his admiration. He had sharp wit and memory".[1]

Azad, as he himself admitted, could not but be a poet. His father was fond of poetry, and he made his son read out poems to him. The impact of it on young Azad was that he started composing poetry at the age of fifteen. He started with lyrical poetry, and later composed in other forms. At first his poetic name was 'Azad', but it was later changed to 'Janbaz', and finally to 'Azad'.

During his tenure of service, Azad was transferred to Tral Middle School on the excuse that he indulged in politics and associated himself with the struggle of freedom. His house was searched by the police, but no substantial case could be started against him. He was not even granted leave to go to see his only son on his death bed. Azad lost his son when the latter was only four years of age. It had a tremendous impact on his views about life. Dr. Padam Nath Ganjoo wrote : "Medicines had no effect, prayers had no impact, Azad's faith was injured, Ahad did not remain a 'Janbaz'. He was freed and intellectually he was removed of many confusions".[2]

Unlike Mahjoor, Azad was unfortunate to observe the "New Kashmir", which he had advocated and sung about through his poetry. With the dawn of freedom, death came near him. Azad did not enjoy good health ; he remained always ill. In 1948, he fell ill at Surasyar, a village, where he served as teacher Local physicians tried to cure him but of

1. *Ibid*, p. 37.
2. *Ibid*, p. 39.

no avail. He was admitted to Rattan Rani Hospital, owned by one of his friends Dr. O. N. Koul. He was later taken to S.M.H.S. Hospital, Srinagar, where he was operated upon for appendicites. He, however, died one week after the operation in the same hospital, "like an orphan, unwept, unhonoured and unsung".[1]

Influences

Azad's social surroundings were conditioned by village life. He had close association with some teachers of his rank and with the village 'Elite'. He, however, stayed for one academic session in Srinagar, pursuing technical training in education in The Normal School (A Teachers' Training School). It was too short a period for him to establish contacts with the urban intellectual class. He lived out of his village again for a short period during his service in another village, namely, Tral. This village had no intellectual class to boast of. However, he did make contacts with some well-known intellectuals during his life time.

Certainly Azad made contacts with intellectuals and poets and exposed himself to their influence and Mahjoor was the first such poet. The former arrived in his village to attend a Revenue Department Camp, and the latter called on him. Soon they became close associates and Azad offered to write a biography of Mahjoor which he completed. However, in addition to Mahjoor's biography, Azad wrote a book on the literary history of Kashmiri language, namely "*Kashmiri Shairi Aur Zuban*", a book of great value and almost equal in importance to Brown's *History of Persian Literature*.[2]

P. N. Bazaz was the second intellectual, Azad came into contact with in 1942. According to the former, they were companions in the struggle for freedom of Kashmir. He says : "The only difference we had is manifested in the expression of our revolutionary ideas. Azad expressed them through versi-

1. P.N. Bazaz, *Struggle for freedom in Kashmir*, Pamposh Publications, Delhi, p. 304.

2. *Ibid*, p. 12.

fication and P. N. Bazaz in prose."[1] Bazaz, a socialist, is well-known as a journalist and historian. His great contribution lies in moulding the poet's progressive ideas. In the beginning, Azad did not see him in person but sent to him his poems by post so that these could be published in the daily paper which Bazaz edited.

Next to Bazaz, Azad came close to Dr. Padam Nath Ganjoo, an Assistant Surgeon in the Department of Health, Government of Jammu and Kashmir. He has retired since from government service but continues to practise medicines. Dr. Ganjoo is also a well-informed man, with a progressive outlook on life. He had very close relations with Azad and his family. Dr. Ganjoo had the possession of the manuscripts of Azad's poetry and of his book "*Kashmiri Shairi Aur Zuban*", on the death of his friend. However, the book "Kashmiri Shairi Aur Zuban" was sold to the J & K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, and has since been published. Azad's death-bed will was that the manuscript be handed-over to either, Pt. P. N. Bazaz or Dr. O. N. Koul (of Rattan Rani Hospital) or Mirza Arif Beg (Retired Director of Sericulture) or Dr. P. N. Ganjoo. Probably the manuscripts would have gone to Pt. P. N. Bazaz but for his detention in jail during that period.[2]

Mr. Arif Beg, a well-known Kashmiri poet and prose writer, and O. N. Koul of Rattan Rani Hospital, a learned man with progressive outlook and a social reformer, happened to influence Azad equally. Thus, most of poet's associates were either socialists or men of progressive outlook. None of them are guided by religious fanaticism. All of them are still alive and have written articles or books about Azad. Bazaz and P. N. Ganjoo have made major contributions. The former wrote "Shairi Insanyat", a treatise on Azad's philosophy and outlook, and the later edited his poetical works in 'Kulyati-Azad' published by the J & K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages with a long introduction.

1. P. N. Bazaz, *Shairi-Insanyat* (Urdu), n.d, Hali Publishing House, Delhi, p. 8.
2. Kulyati-Azad, n. 2, p. 30.

Before he came under the influence of these progressive people, Azad had been composing verse of romance and devotional lyrics. Such lyrics were usually influenced by Urdu and Persian poetry. Soon after he was exposed to radical influences he wrote poetry in which freedom, revolution and politics were the main themes. Other influences included the Maharaja's unwise government under which he served, the political upheaval of 1931, Mahjoor's revolutionary poetry, feudal economy and the Russian Revolution. This maturity in his thought is manifest in his revolutionary ideas and poems on socialism. Amongst such poems can be included "Aqal-u-Ishaq" and many others.[1] Even among lyrics many show the indirect influence of contemporary politics, and according to Dr. Padam Nath Ganjoo, they could be classified as "Symbolic".[2]

From childhood, Azad was brought up in an environment in which religion dominated every sphere of life. However, he was not chained by religious bigotry and believed in religious toleration. He looked upon different religions as various means of reaching the same goal and, therefore, he held that the Vedas and Shastras, the *Quran* and the *Bible* are not meant to create antagonism between man and man, but a sense of belonging to one humanity.[3] Azad was exposed to deeper influences after he turned to poetry rather than he was subjected to during his childhood.

Azad was introduced by his progressive friends to Marx and other radical thinkers and to the history of Kashmir. Therefore, he developed a scientific attitude to all aspects of life. This approach made Azad a fellow-traveller. Though his academic education did not go beyond matriculation, yet he

1. The poems included are, 'Shakwa-Kashmir', 'Khudi', 'Be-Khudi', 'Nalla Badshah', 'Inqalab', 'Khaba Khayala-Wahma-Gumana', 'Subha Sadiq', 'Yavun-ta-Bujor', 'Sarmaaidari', 'Panchadar', 'Soan', 'Khuda', 'Idd', 'Maon-Wattan', 'Inqalabi-Russ' and 'Insan-wanan Tarkan Kun'. All of them are composed in Kashmiri.
2. *Kulyat-Azad*, n. 2, p. 49.
3. *Ibid*, p. 117.

developed a scientific attitude and a progressive outlook which cannot be expected of many graduates of the present times.[1]

Azad, like all poets, was the child of his environments and, in the words of Bansi Nirdosh, it shaped his social consciousness. However, Kashmir, at that time, was an aching and ailing society, to which Azad provided a cure. "Azad was the result of his environment in which there was oppression by the bureaucracy, suppression by feudal lords, helplessness of workers, monopoly or bigots, selfishness and egoism of the rich, disheartenment and lack of confidence of the poor, in which was engulfed his whole life. There was no ray of hope in his life, nor was it in any way manifest. Azad was born at a time when on all sides there was hunger, poverty, scarcity, narrow-mindedness, insufficiency and helplessness. He hailed from a tenancy class family which was crushed in the grip of feudalism and *jagirdari* system. This class reflected a deep cultural degeneration and social demoralization. When the ideas are suppressed and traditions limit social change, man is denied a happy existence and his deep sentiments is atrophied. In these circumstances, our poets from sub-conscious, carry the drama in their own imaginations, if not vitiated by their own mental height, carry through intuitional knowledge to enlighten their future thought".[2] Azad thus enlightened the people to understand the future and make it worthwhile. His thoughts reacted to the situations very well and composed verses to bring a better life to the Kashmiri.

Socialist Ideas :

Azad developed a scientific approach to his understanding and expression of socialism. He made his countrymen love their country and be patriotic. Then he examined the existing society with capitalism and feudalism of its own indigenous variety, and the evils that had sapped it. He found a solution

1. Shamim Ahmad Shamim, *Tameer* (Urdu monthly), J & K Information Department, Azad Number, p. 49.
2. *Tameer*, Azad Number, p. 31.

in Hindu-Muslim unity. Thus, on the basis of a revolution, he hoped for a new future. Let us, therefore, examine such of his ideas as made him a socialist.

Azad, while reacting to the deplorable conditions of his people, could not but exhort his people to revolt because he had "a keen eye to observe, a heart to feel, a sharp mind to move".[1] He asked his countrymen to wake up from the slumber of ages, rise against the injustice done to them and love their country. Consequently, he sang :—

What a beauty is our country ?
Our country is what a beauty.
The free Bulbul creates a tumult,
Sings melodies on a flowery bow;
Bulbul to flower and flower unto Bulbul speaketh,
This country of ours is all beauty.[2]

In the poem, "Song of the Country" (*Taranai Wattan*) Azad asks the people to muster courage to fight the despotic ruler, for they live in a beautiful country. He sings :—

Oh, young brave youth,
Bravo, advance ahead,
Struggle perpetually ahead,
Then alone hope and desire
Gather thee and desire,
The songs of your country.[3]

In the poem, "My Country" (*Myon Wattan*), Azad praised the beauty of Kashmir and desires his countrymen to give their best love to it. He praises its birds, trees, meadows, grooves, ravines, dew, dusk, dawn, rivulets, streams, rivers, snowy peaks, lakes, blossoms and seasons. Consequently, he desires the inhabitants of the Valley to love it dearly and faithfully.

1. Kulyati-Azad, n. 2, p. 45.
2. *Ibid*, p. 178.
3. *Ibid*, p. 180.

He sings :—

Sow the seed of love, fill the cups of love
Amongst the love, the best should go to your country.[1]

Azad's two more compositions in praise of his country are 'Wattan Daro' (i e., Owner of the Country) and "Ha Wattan Daro" (Oh, the owner of the Country). In these poems he addresses the inhabitants of the country and appeals to them to understand their beloved land and its vicissitudes. He makes them to understand symbolically because he could not speak to them openly and plainly for fear of the foreign ruler. The verses thus clearly prove that he was denied freedom of speech. Azad also addressed the youth and questioned them. He wished they would care for their beloved land. Thus, in his five poems[2] he appealed to the conscience of Kashmiris to love and shower affection on their motherland. That alone was the solution to their problems. To him selfless sacrifice was the essence of patriotism.

Azad lamented the helplessness of the Kashmiris who suffered under various forms of exploitation, social evils and a feudal economy. In the discourse between *Aqal* (wisdom) and *Ishaq* (Love) he describes the helplessness of the people of Kashmir. To him the innocent Kashmiri is devoid of political power. He says :—

Aqal : Why do not these innocent Kashmiris rule ?
Look at their adversity and their pursuits.
Ishaq : Not content with labour without wages,
No demand for wealth without power.
Aqal : Why are they sad, why are their heads bowed ?
There was a time when they had power and the pen.
Ishaq : The lion is chained in the far-off jungle,
Thee shall roar when it is free.

1. *Ibid*, p. 186.
2. 'Taranai-Wattan', 'Myon Wattan', 'Sawal', 'Wattan Daro' and 'Ha, Wattan Daro'—all composed in Kashmiri.

Aqal : None advances ahead—all seek self-interest,
None masters the house, all gone astray.
Ishaq : Homeless knows not what a home or a desert is,
Homeless are the owners of this house.
Aqal : Those lose their garden who are unwise,
They are slaves with a mark and are poor.
Ishaq : Falsehood is the order of the day,
Truth is the law of the storm,
Self-seeker is mendacity,
Truth runs with a storm.[1]

Exploitation is the hall-mark of feudal and capitalist societies. It has many forms, and some of these are described by Azad in the following :—

Look to our innocent children and their plight,
See to our bodies, they are feasts for the rich.

. . . .

Should her (of Kashmir) family die of hunger on the roads,
She reared the son like Badshah in her lap.

. . . .

Should the water be poison for us ?
The water reared talents liks Gani, Sarfi, and Kalhana for us.

. . . .

Thee (rich) have robes coloured in our blood,
We with injured heart weep like flood.[2]

Working classes were very much exploited and Azad wanted them to be conscious. He sings :—

You neither heard nor did you see,
What you gained of your labour ?
Then I would speak but cannot,
So hear and know the meaning.

. . . .

1. *Kulyati-Azad*, n. 2, pp. 79-82.
2. *Ibid*, p. 187.

Their (rich) children, their family and favourites,
Were reared at the cost of our blood,
Is their (rich) blood more reddish than ours ?
So hear me and interpret.

. . . .

As 'Kabab' they (rich) fry us in the pan,
They fry us in turns,
They have no fear of God,
Hear my advice and interpret.[1]

Azad was conscious of the capitalist class and of the injustice done by it to the common man. He wrote of capitalism in the following manner :

Slave, poor, monarch and the rich,
Pray to God, command no justice,
One enjoys, others look thirsty at a distance,
These are problems and contradictions,
Creation of capitalism.

. . . . .

It separates father from his son,
It separates brother from his brother,
It converts friends, enemies of each other,
It spoils, wipes and frustrates love,
This is capitalism, this is capitalism.[2]

. . . .

Capitalism pre-supposes a class society and Azad could find no justification for God's creation of a class society. He questions God about the creation of classes in a society in his poem 'Khudi' :—

Oh men, you neither deserve to be slaves nor beggars,
God is it godly to create a fraudulant capitalist.

. . . . .

1. *Ibid*, pp. 188 & 189.
2. *Ibid*, p. 290.

One decorates his plates and dishes with gold,
The other has no meals in the evening whole,
The virtuous I saw going without goals,
For you (God) have no drink and meals for such men of gold.

. . . .

The rich, I see, devours and fries the poor,
Oh, great God, I seek protection from you.

. . . .

One erects bungalows, decorates them with colours,
The one enjoys, the other destroys them.

. . . . .

They enjoy your treasures and relax ;
Nothing for me in your stores of fate.[1]

One of his important poems is '*Dushman*' (Enemy), in which Azad brought out the contrast between the standards of the rich and the poor. To him the rich are immoral but pretend to be decent, gentle and honest. The rich are hypocritical and the law is a refuge for him to exploit the poor. Capitalist justice is a cover for the wrongs of the rich. Azad sang :—

The enemosity of the poor is meanness,
The enemosity of the rich is gentility,
The poor is guilty and is a bad enemy,
The rich is gentleman of par excellence,
The truth of the poor is rebellion,
The rich is to dispense justice,
It is his own creation and protects his exploitation.

. . . .

They enjoy your treasures and relax,
Nothing for me in your stores of fate.

. . . .

1. *Ibid*, p. 261.

They have blood, I have a human heart,
I have blood, I have a human heart,
You made me mum, you made me dumb,
After all I had also mind to enjoy.[1]

. . .

Kingly robes are decorated by your blood,
Your tongue is dry, your feet are bare,
Oh, harmless worker, your injuries flow blood.[2]

. . . .

To Azad, a Kashmiri is a slave and must fight for freedom. Slavery is a curse. Azad sings :—

The slavery makes the heart to sink,
The slavery makes the mind to wink,
The slavery deadens men alive,
All clever, witty and intelligent alike.
The slavery, like the wind of Autumn, makes to fall,
Many of the leaves in gardens and lawns.
Slavery makes many wise
Bow before many unwise ;
Slavery makes you to bear a tyrant,
Like idleness, sorrow and all dishonour.[3]

Azad hated slavery and alien rule. He abhored exploitation under colonial rule and, therefore, sings :—

Jewels and diamonds garlanded,
Frisking deep in the oceans seven,
See these fraudulant Londoners are come,
Thee, oh, waterfall, yet wait for a moment.
Businessmen decorated their shops,
Bartared our lives with different sorts,

1. *Ibid*, p. 274.
2. *Ibid*, p. 328.
3. *Ibid*, p. 412.

Of interest, of business and all sorts,
Thee, oh, waterfall, ye wait for a moment.[1]

Azad was very conscious of social evils and injustice inflicted on the people of Kashmir by foreign rule. He wrote about it boldly and without fear. Azad had aversion for the institution of money-lending which ruined the poor :

Friends together complained to Satan;
What shalt the money-lender do,
When the labour is dead of starvation ?
Satan replied, "They should seek God's refuge,
For they (money-lenders) shalt pawn their coffins and graves".[2]

Social injustice was occasioned to the people of Kashmir by all classes, who either were rich or in the ruling class or landlords or the administrators. The revenue authorities, forest department employees and fisheries, watch and ward officers inflicted oppression, and to this Azad reacted sharply :—

I am (tenant) in gratitude to God for my life,
The rest I am—my own creation.

. . . . .

My history—is the history of all troubles,
My body is pained, it cries like a hallow pipe,
I am not delicate, nor my speech eloquent,
Slavery has encircled me like a reptile,
This poison and fear has wrecked me.

. . . . .

I see to the age and to my own self,
They are my enemies for whom I sacrifice.[3]

1. *Ibid*, p. 202.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 414—588.
3. *Ibid*, p. 335.

Monarchy and tyranny perpetuate at the cost of my body,
My calls for mercy are turned to dust and ashes.

. . . . .

Azad was pained to observe the poverty and adversity of his countrymen, and was emotionally moved. So he sang :—

Oh What a handsome youth,
Are poisoned to death of poverty.

. . . .

Treacherous friends gained their ends,
For you (poor) are left *Kabba* and the temple.
The whole world aches to hear the cry of the poor,
But the stone-hearted rich, care not a fig.

. . . . .

Who toils and sucks his blood for you day and night ?
He whom you hate, oh the owner of might.

. . . .

Have you no pity for my innocent children,
Oh, careless God, is it your greatness.

. . . .

My kith and kin die of hunger in my presence,
Many unknown people enjoy what I earned.

. . . . .

You gave the rich only life, the rest they have is mine,
Now see, they are not happy even on subsistence level of mine.[1]

Azad's religion was universal, and his concept of it was wide. He was not only a believer in Hindu-Muslim accord but he was a votary of religious tolerance. For him a Hindu and a Musalman were equal and believed that his religion was based on social harmony and unity. Consequently, he neither joined the Musalmans in the mosque nor the Hindus in the

1. *Ibid*, pp. 363 & 367.

temple. Azad was pained at communal troubles.[1] Thus, he intended to create a secular society, in which all religious communities lived in harmony. To this end he educated his people through his poetry, and was against that religion which set man against man. He condemned leaders who exploit people on the basis of religion. Azad believed that all religions have the same source and, cosequently, cannot go against each other.[2] He, thorefore, sang :—

In this vast expanse of oneness,
Who is my kin, and who a stranger to me ;
A Musalman is to me as good as a Hindu ;
My '*deen*' is fraternity, my *dharm* is oneness,
My light is meant for one and all.....

—Poem "Shama"[3]

"In a crusade against fanaticism", Kaumudi writes : "Azad refused to be a fanatic or communal. His songs, in fact, are a crusade against religious bigotry. He it was who gave first a clarion call against religious prejudices". His denunciation of religious tolerance found expression, thus :—

The temples, mosques and such other institutions,
Indulge in empty drum beatings ;
Their hearts are utterly devoid of love.[4]

Azad rose far above religious prejudices and preached the gospel of love and universal brotherhood. He had full faith in the goodness of human nature and reiterated that any distinction between man and man would strike at the very roots of democracy, thus :—

Pray, announce to all Kashmiris the secrets thou has confided in Azad,

1. *Ibid*, pp. 118 & 119.
2. *Ibid*, p. 124.
3. P.N. Bazaz, n. 6, pp. 301—303.
4. Kaumudi, n. 1, p. 84.

After casting away frivolities of *Kufr* and *deen*,
The light of the candle is for all—Hindus and Musalmans.[1]

In his poem 'Panchadar' (i.e. Water cataract), Azad desires the people to cast off antagonism on the basis of religion and be united like the 'Panchadar' so that a fight is possible against the enemies of the people. Thus, he wrote :—

There shall not be discord on account of '*Kufr* and *Deen*',
There shall not be discord on sacred thread and beads,
There shall be neither rich nor poor,
Thee, oh waterfall, yet wait for a moment.[2]

Azad, further remarks :—

Recitation of the *Gita* and the *Quran* is futile,
For, if you do not act, your business is volatile.

. . . . .

Faith, '*Kufr*', '*Deen*' and you,
Hind, Arab, *Cheen* (China) all your fanatsy ;
Be ashamed, do not sleep in morn,
Why can't you change ? Your labour is your God.

In the discourse between 'wisdom' and 'destiny' Azad asks questions like :—

"What is *dharma* ?
What is Islam ?
What is revealation ?
What is intuition ?"

And, again, he asks :—

Why Hindu and Musalman ?
Why idol worship and *Kabba* ?

1. *Ibid*, p. 85.
2. *Kulyati-Azad*. n. 2, p. 201.

Azad's devastating reply to religionists is provided in his epoch-making poem, 'Shikwa—Iblis' (Complaint of Satan). It is a challenge and a frank denial of God, writes P.N. Bazaz. Azad asserts in it that only 'ignorant people' believe in His existence. "Who has seen God and Satan". "The poem created a furore among the orthodox classes. There was a talk of issuing '*Fatwa*' against the poet and declaring him as apostate." Bazaz adds, "Even Mahjoor, Arif and some other poets persuaded him to retrace his steps and come on the old conventional path. I know how furious he felt. But in his characteristic calm, dignified, undisturbed and thoughtful manner," he answered :

Oh faithful (religionist)—have your own God ?
Oh faithful . . . . I have my own ;
Thou hath God—mine ideal man,
Thine God takes pleasure in temple, mosque and *dharmsalas*,
My beloved (man) is bliss with love for man.[1]

In his poem, "A Dream An Idea and a Superstition", Azad talks about religion as :—

Butkhana, Kabba, Looks and annals,
Hell, heaven, and other harassments,
All to my belief and to me,
Are dreams. ideals and superstitions.

Azad, in yet another attack on communalism and religiosity says :—

(Although)
You are founder of faith and *dharm*,
You are least interested in both ;
Oh, faithful, humanity is ashamed of your action.[2]

. . . . .

1. P.N. Bazaz, n. 6, p. 265.
2. *Kulyati-Azad*, n. 2, p. 374.

You erected the temple, you laid the *Kabba*,
What is the fault of the Gita, oh believer in the *Quran* ?

. . . . .

Azad, therefore, is convinced that communalism and religious bigotry are the main hurdles to the progress of man. To him religion is a means to exploitation and, hence it is irrelevant for future generations.[1]

Thus, to fight existing social evils—evils which had crept into society owing to capitalist economy and communalism he envisaged a revolution. Azad talks of revolution in four of his poems. The first poem describes the message that revolution carries. He defines revolution, raises questions and answers these himself. The questions are :—

What is revolution ?
What does revolution demand ?
Behind a curtain, there is some one,
He says something, he does something ;
What is *Kufr*, *Deen*, Sin and Virtue ?
This is revolution, this demands revolution.

. . . . .

Life is struggle, break all obstructions,
Do not worry even if God comes in the way,
Do not retard, break all curtains,
This is revolution, this demands revolution.

. . . . .

Some are rich, some are poor,
Who admits it ? Who believes it ?
What is luck, what is fortune ?
It is obsolete, it is a dream,
This is revolution, this means revolution.

. . . . .

You are human; how a Hindu or a Musalman ?
If Hindu or Musalman, how are you human ?

1. P.N. Bazaz, n. 8, p. 20.

Oh, why do you keep your life in trouble ?
This is revolution, this means revolution.

. . . . .

Hell, heaven and the day of ressurection,
Are all the creation of your mind,
These superstitions help you nowhere,
This is revolution, this means revolution.

The second poem on revolution is entitled 'Inqalab' (Revolution). In this poem the poet explains the effects of revolution. In it he remarks that a revolution is necessitated by time and it brings new life to the people. Those who try to retard revolution, the reactionary forces, shall have to perish. Thus he says :—

Revolution shall speak its secrets to the Spring,
When the garden of revolution shall blossom revolution.
You lay thorns on my pathways,
You must know that thee shall tread
The same pathways through revolution.

. . . . .

Why should one look backwards ?
Why should one request the reactionary ?
Revolution shall teach thee to go ahead.

. . . . .

Scholars might embed jewels and tell beads,
All problems shall be solved through revolution.

. . . . .

Some youth did not awaken through my call,
Today or tomorrow, revolution shall awake all.

. . . . .

Every flood, every river has its own course,
Every revolution shall wipe off tyranny from its course.

In the third poem on revolution Azad relates revolution to life, a revolution that brings a radical change. So he sings :—

What is life ? A book of revolution,
Revolutian, revolution and revolution.

Really life means tumult,
The essence of agitation is revolution.
Law protects those who suck blood of others,
A mean jackal sucks the blood of a fierce tiger,
Break the curtains and enjoy to the brim,
Foster a revolution, a revolution.[1]

Azad is revolutionary. He believes that society he was brought in, was an obsolete one. It was nearing a crash. It could not be improved but amashed to establish a new social order. Thus, he believes in total revolution. A revolution which could smash the economic system and establish a new economic system which could be in consonance with the new social order.[2]

By revolution, Azad does not mean only change but change for the betterment of society. He does not want change for the sake of change. To him the change should be in consonance with the past of Kashmiri as well. However, he does not mean by it as the revival of the past but revival of such standards and values that are utilitarian in essence. A revolutionary, therefore, for him is one who is embedded with the knowledge of the past to learn for future.

Azad, therefore, desires his worker, peasantry and labour to be conscious politically so that they revolt. A leader might deceive them yet they should not be discouraged because their unity would crystallize even that leadership.

To him man has right to change. He has the right to break the chains of slavery and consequently, Kashmiris should be confident of overcoming their difficulties. A revolutionary, according to him, is intellectually and spiritually free. He should sacrifice his narrow interests for others and desire to establish a social order which is free from material, social, mental and other weaknesses. A revolutionary has the right to smash a decayed and diseased society and should

1. *Kulyati-Azad*, n. 2, pp. 298—306.
2. P.N. Bazaz, n. 8, p. 50.

fight all reactionaries. He desires all fraudulant leaders to be killed through revolution.[1]

Azad did not consider revolution a child's play. He wanted revolutionary to be a perfect man, who can shoulder every responsibility in the cause of human progress. He should be conscious of the forces against revolution, and envisages Kashmiris to fight all forces of disruption and obstruction.[2] In other poem on revolution, "Inqilab-un-inqilab", he, therefore, appealed to his countrymen to foster revolution which is a cure for all social and political evils and injustices. He appealed to the youth to bring about a revolution as soon as possible ; otherwise the onus of indifference would fall on them. Azad asks :

Whom do you obey ? Whom are you afraid of ?
Whom do you love ? Whom do you gild stones for ?
Is their blood red and your's white ?
Therefore, foster revolution, foster revolution.
Recognize yourself, enjoy the love,
Away with slavery, show your wit,
You made the rich, named him *Nawab*,
Therefore, foster revolution, foster revolution.[3]

Azad does not only exhort youth to foster revolution but he wants the working classes as well to rise in rebellion. He confesses that the worker had to walk barefoot and injure his feet, and make them bleed. Consequently, Azad asks the working classes to rise to the occasion and remove all obstructions. Accordingly, he incites them in the following manner :—

Oh, great worker, you are storm of revolution,
Come out of this thorny land wiping all reactions.

. . . . .

1. *Ibid*, pp. 54, 61 & 74.
2. *Ibid*, p. 82.
3. *Kulyati-Azad*, n. 2, p. 307.

The more you are simple and innocent,
The more you shall have to attend 'Begar'
You are book of revolution with worms,
They play hide and seek in your pages.[1]

Azad's forceful concept of revolution is projected in his famous poem, *Darya* (Song of the River). In it, we find a clarion call for action and revolution. Dr. Kaumudi says that in this poem, "the rythmic movement of the waters is symbolic of a call for action and revolt for freedom". The waters of the river speak of its struggle against all odds. These strike against all obstructions in its way : slopy hills, peaks, stones, trees, sands, demarcations, grooves, caverns and ravines. The river is proud of surmounting all hurdles and it maintains its level and unity at all costs. It (river) neither requires flattery nor encouragement to pursue the path of struggle. In consonance with its nature, the river moves unabatedly and helps all men—the water is at the service of mankind. It runs on fearlessly, unmindful of generations that come and go. The river sings :—

I corrode away the heart of hills,
Such is the momentum of my flow,
I bathe the (tender) frames of sweet
Such is the softness of my ways.

.....

My curves and twists are full of love,
I get the music of life in wanderings,
Amidst the flowers and the nightingales,
I play upon the sweet *santoor*,
Among the rocks, the stony hearts
I beat the drum of victory.

.....

When I witness ups and downs, banks and demarcations,
I lose my temper,

1. *Ibid*, p. 328.

I seek oneness, equality,
For that I run, foam and fret,
Hence is it that, water though I am,
I fall on the burning coals of mulbery-wood.

.....

I strike myself against all forts and obstructions,
I unite myself in all dispersals and distractions.

.....

Let there be a king, a Hindu, a Musalman,
I shall not wait, filling their cups,
To me all Rajas, Maharajas are alike petitioners,
For I rejoice in struggles and obstructions.

.....

I lay carpets of green on my banks,
For my fatigued workers and lovers,
Recitation of the *Gita*, and the *Quran* is futile,
For, if you do not act, your life is volatile.[1]

Future Hope :

Azad's hope for the future lay in socialism and Marxian socialism was to him a religion. That is why, he defined it as gold purified and perfected through fire. He believed that socialism had made the spiritual world recede into the background as against the material world. Socialism was, according to Azad, the secret of happy life. Consequently, he sings :—

His (Marx's socialism) faith is the faith of nature,
His faith is the gold from fire,
His faith is the spring of the springs.

.....

All secrets are opened to the worker and the ignorant,
All steps are taken by wisemen in caution.

.....

The mind of Namrood is exhausted by the mosquito,
Just as panther is devoured by a tiger.[2]

.....

1. *Ibid*, pp. 218—227.
2. *Ibid*, p. 346.

The wealth of the world is produced by working class,
The pen is owned by the intellectual and carpenter as his tools,
The capitalist who collects wealth at any cost,
Is the enemy of the world and poison for humanity.

Azad believed in scientific socialism and he did not believe in working for a just society through non-violence. "Gandhiji's condemnation of workers that their strike was illegal, was disfavoured by Azad", writes Dr. Padam Nath Ganjoo. According to Azad, oppression is the meanest trade and hence a reaction to it is moral. Consequently, the worker has a right to revolt. To him capitalist is hypocrite and hence he answers Gandhiji in the following :—

The law feeds, where labour bleeds,
Is this humane in the capitalist.[1]

In the future of his creation Azad hopes a socialist State in which means of production remain in the control of the State.

The wealth shall be the wealth of all.
The capitalist is killed, so it is all.[2]

In the future State of Azad, once the childish frivolities of *Kufr* and *Deen* would be cast away, there would be freedom for all. P. N. Bazaz writes : "Azad is confident that he is free spiritually as well as intellectually, but he is anxious that the countrymen may also share this freedom with him. *Deen* and *Kufr* are childish and should be discarded". In the words of Azad :

Pray, announce to all Kashmiris the secrets thou has confided to Azad,

1. *Ibid*, p. 259.
2. *Ibid*, p. 239.

After casting away childish frivolities of *Kufr* and *Deen* :
The light from the candle is for all Hindus and
Musalmans.[1]

In freedom was the future hope and it would bring to him equality. To bring such freedom and equality Azad would go through fire, and says :—

To become free, to end tyranny and to abolish superstition,
This is my cherished dream, this my desire and this my
slogan.

Again, he says :—

I have accepted the burden of ages on my head ;
The angels and the heavens have shuddered at my
doggedness ;
I have chewed steel, I have braved fire ;
I have sipped the blood of my heart ;
But this my head has not, till this day,
Bent low before any one but Thee.[2]

Azad was hopeful of a bright future and believes revolution to be fruitful and good. That is why he sang :—

Let spring set in,
All ice shall melt away,
Let summer set in,
All ice on peaks shall vanish away.[3]

For Azad all obstacles in the way of revolution were temporary. They would soon die down and socialism could be erected on firm foundations. Once Kashmiris had fought

1. P.N. Bazaz, n. 6, p. 301.
2. Kaumudi, n. 1, p. 84.
3. *Kulyati-Azad*, n. 2, pp. 382—391.

for freedom successfully, they could hope to enjoy the fruits of liberty. So he sang :—

Let you enjoy the gifts of independent country,
Let the worker be young and gay,
For now the capitalist is old and grey,
Now you are free and free.[1]

Azad, thus sought freedom in socialism and through revolution. Unity of the nation is for him, a great weapon for the achievement of the goal of socialism. The dawn of socialism would be received by the flowers, according to Azad, with great joy :—

Dawn has dawned with pomp,
Darkness vanished away,
Light and light has adorned the way,
Siezes the scent (of flowers) in the morn rays.[2]

Thus, Azad's future Kashmir or 'Naya Kashmir' was a socialist State. He believed in a form of government that was free from stain of despotism and redolent of freedom and equality, a government dedicated to a just social order. Socialism to the poet was a solution to all the inequalities found in the society in which he lived.[3] He was consciously a Marxian type of socialist not a Royst Radical,[4] as Professor J. L. Koul has tried to classify him.

1. *Ibid.*
2. Dr. Habibullah Hamidi, n. 13, p. 56.
3. Dr. P. N. Ganjoo, n. 2, p. 106.
4. Professor J.L. Koul, n. 13, p. 30.

CHAPTER VII

Conclusions : Socialist Programme in Action

The National Conference in Power :

The post-partition period in the Indian sub-continent witnessed in Kashmir more uncertainty than any other princely State of India. As we know, both the Muslim Conference and the National Conference were striving for recognition as the sole voice of the people in the middle of 1946. The National Conference, at the same time, was symbolised "the forces of a national secular movement determined to remove the Maharaja, not in his capacity as an alien Dogra ruler, but as a feudal anachronism".[1]

Lord Mountbatten visited Kashmir in June, 1947. "He found his host (Maharaja Hari Singh) in defensive mood, unable to face up to the great problems which sooner or later would inevitably present themselves. Attractive as the temptations of isolated independence were, it was clear that he would receive the worst of the two worlds. Pakistan would

1. Lord Birdwood, *Two Nations and Kashmir*, Robert Hale Limited, London, 1953, p. 38.

be plotting to remove the Hindu Dynasty from continuing to rule a Mohammedan people, while the Indian Government, through Skeikh Abdullah, would be seeking his downfall as an enemy of the neighbouring progressive democracy".[1]

The Maharaja could not actually face the problems that confronted him in the post-partition months. Pakistan was hostile, India was suspicious, Moslems in Poonch rebelled, volunteers of the R.S.S., Akali Sikhs and the Indian National Army entered Jammu and armed men infiltrated into Kashmir from Pakistan, and free flow of goods and necessities of life was dropped. Ram Chand Kak, Prime Minister of Kashmir, had to be removed, a government under Janak Singh could not function and Lala Mehar Chand Mahajan was appointed as the Prime Minister ; but the situation continued to deteriorate. Maharaja Hari Singh had no alternative but to share the governance of the State with Sheikh Abdullah. It was the Maharaja's intention to set up an interim government in association with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's party but with his own Prime Minister. Wrote Birdwood : "Events moved swiftly and within a month, Abdullah assumed full responsibility after release."[2]

After the release, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah reassessed his leadership without actively participating in the administration. He paid two visits to Delhi and had found Kashmir in a condition of anarchy. Consequently, he was asked to act as the Chief Administrator, "in a few breathless days at the end of October 1947".[3] What type of government Sheikh Abdullah intended to set up was already known. He spoke to *The Peoples' Age* reporter in Bombay on 26th October, 1947, in the following words :—

> "In Kashmir we want a peoples' government. We want a government which will give equal rights and equal opportunities to all men, irrespective of caste and creed. The Kashmir government would not be of any one

1. *Ibid*, p. 40.
2. *Ibid*, p. 61.
3. *Ibid*.

community. It will be a joint government of the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. That is what I am fighting for."

Socialist Programme in Action

The government of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah came into existence at a crucial stage in Kashmir history. At first, he established an emergency government and later a stable ministry. He had to face many problems before he could implement the programme envisaged in the document, *Naya Kashmir*. However, soon after the National Conference assumed power it was engaged in shaping the destiny of the people of Kashmir. It had to take steps towards implementing the avowed policies of the organization. It was for this reason that Josep Korbel thought that the State of Jammu and Kashmir was "subjected to a systematic process of communization".[1]

Josep Korbel, a Czechoslovak, member of U.N. Commission on Kashmir, found danger in Kashmir because of the "communization" of the State. To what extent his arguments substantiate his thesis that Kashmir would turn red is not the point to be discussed here. The fact is that his study substantiates the thesis that the freedom movement in Kashmir had sufficient ground to be considered a socialist movement. Korbel's may not be a realistic study for the students of socialism but he tried to prove at length that socialist ideas and movements existed in Kashmir prior to 1947 and after 1947 a 'communization' was in progress.[2]

To Korbel, as well as to any student of the freedom movement in Kashmir, the first task of the Sheikh administration was to invite peasants to cultivate free of rent the land they worked upon. All economically privileged persons, *Chakdars*, *jagirdars*, *maufidars* and *mukarraries* were abolished without any compensation to them. This was in

1. Josep Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir*, Princeton University Press, 1954, p. 249.
2. *Ibid.*

conformity with the declared policy of the National Conference to give of "land to the tiller". "The total cultivated area in the State was about 2,200,000 acres, most of which belonged to the Maharaja or his feudal vassals".[1] A total of 82,479 acres, belonging to *chakdars,* was mutated in the name of the tenants by the administration immediately after its assumption of power[2]. In addition to this, *twenty-one chaks* of twenty-one *chakdars* were confiscated under the orders of the Government and allotted to tenants. These *chakdars* were declared as enemy agents.

The orders with regard to the abolition of *chakdari* were issued on July 13th, 1950, July 13th being annually celebrated as Martyrs' Day, on account of the first rebellion against the Dogra rule. The steps that were taken by the peoples' government towards socialization and communization in the first two years in power are summed up hereunder :—

(1) Abolition of *zamindari* was preceded by the withdrawal of the jagirs which the Dogra rulers had granted to some privileged people.
(2) Grazing tax was abolished.
(3) The earlier governments had introduced the system of *Mukararies* and *Maufidars.* Under it revenue on some lands was collected by, or handed over to some individuals as a right. The peoples' government immediately abolished *Mukararies* and *Maufidars.*
(4) Chenani, a jagir in Jammu province, a legacy from the medieval feudal times was abolished as a jagir and amalgamated with tehsil Udhampur as Udhampur is district-headquarter as well.
(5) The Tenancy Act of 1980 (Bikrami) was amended twice (2005 and 2006 Bikrami) to protect tenancy rights. Consequently, no tenant could be ejected from the lands by a landlord. The landlords could claim only ¼th of the produce from tenants in case irrigated

1. *Ibid,* p. 215.
2. *Badl Chakdarun Ka Khatma* (Urdu): All J&K National Conference, Vishnath Printing Press, Kashmir, n.d., p. 7.

land exceeded twelve acres, and from un-irrigated land only ⅓rd of the total produce was due to the landlord.

(6) In Kashmir tenancy rights were protected upto the extent of two acres of irrigated land and upto four acres of non-irrigated area for each family. In Jammu province the rights of the tenants were protected upto the extent of four acres of irrigated land and eight acres of non-irrigated one.

(7) All functionaries of the type of *numberdars*, *zaildars*, *mansabdars*, etc. were abolished and a new cadre established whose appointment was by election.[1]

(8) Abolition of debts contracted under the *sahukari* system.

(9) Land belonging to a village by virtue of its proximity to it but uncultivated was given to persons who were entitled to it by virtue of the right of pre-emption.

(10) All lands distributed under any scheme were granted to the tillers without compensation.[2]

Further, in the agricultural sector, grow more food programme was initiated. This programme was launched as a movement, and to this end land which was not cultivated was given to tillers and modern techniques of farming were adopted,[3] so that self-sufficiency in food could be attained.

The peoples' government further engaged itself in the establishment of communications between other parts of India and the State. It constructed bridges and other means of transport including buses and trucks that could help carry passengers and food-stuffs from one place to another.

In forestry, fisheries, industries and electricity new schemes were introduced. New hydro-electric projects were taken in hand and roads and irrigation facilities were specially attended to.

1. *Ibid*, pp. 13—15.
2. *Ibid*, p. 16.
3. S. M. Abdullah, *Presidential Address*, Annual conference of the National Conference, 1949, p. 18.

A revolution was inducted in the field of education. The J & K University was established, more colleges and schools were opened. Almost in every village a primary school was opened. Every tehsil school was raised to a high school level, and in every district a degree college was opened.

Provision of many scholarships was made for students to pursue medical and engineering course outside the State. Facilities were provided for students to receive other kinds of technical training outside the State.

A health scheme was introduced in the State, and almost in every village a dispensary was opened.[1]

These revolutionary steps, especially in agriculture, were construed by Korbel to be a potential danger to Kashmir, because he thought these progressive measures would turn Kashmir to communism. Further, Kashmir's proximity to Communist Sinking and Tibet offered an ideal ground for subversive designs, recording to Korbel. In his view all evidences during 1947—1952 pointed to the fact that "neither the Soviet representative at the United Nations nor the Communist Party of India has overlooked its potentialities".[2] Referring to the comments of I. Mazdur, a Russian writer, Korbel commented that to the Russians, the 1931 upheaval in Kashmir was bourgeoise movement in essence, but the same writer later remarked "only the Communist Party of India leading the struggle of peasantry can bring them, the possession of land and liberation from feudal and imperialist oppression in Kashmir".[3]

Whatever the genesis of 1931 upheaval, the truth, according to Korbel, behind these initial expressions of discontent was that these were a forewarning of a revolutionary potential in Kashmir. Consequently, the 'Quit Kashmir' movement launched in 1946 by the National Conference against the

1. Ghulam Mohiddin Hamadani, *Kashmir Kahan se Kahan* (Urdu), Brocas Press, Srinagar, September 1949, pp. 42—44.
2. Joseph Korbel, n. 5, p. 249.
3. *Ibid*, p. 250.

Maharaja, was jubilantly welcomed by the Communists. Writing in the wake of the foremost Soviet specialist in India, A. M. Diakov, Korbel wrote : "A national movement in Kashmir developed the programme of doing away with the Maharaja, of turning Kashmir into a democratic republic, of giving to the people of Kashmir the right of self-determination and so on".[1]

To A.M. Diakov, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah is a man of progressive and democratic views. Diakov in 1951 wrote with regard to Kashmir : "The National Conference was under the leadership of bourgeoise elements which stood close to the 'leftist' wing of the All India National Congress. In 1946, however, the Kashmir peasants accepted a plan according to which workers joined actively in it. Under the influence of the masses, the National Conference accepted a democratic programme. The Azad letters (also) assert that the 'Quit Kashmir' programme was communist in origin and led by men influenced by Russians."[2]

Puran Chand Joshi, Secretary, Communist Party of India, in a statement said : "The peoples" struggle in Kashmir is far-advanced than the struggles in other States in India and it is a more united struggle, they (Kashmir) shall not back it out, they shall fight. The fellow-travellers must side with them. The administration of the State blames the communists for the movement, and it is true that progressive forces are on the side of the peoples, struggle-in Kashmir."[3]

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, on his release in September 1947, said in public meetings that the peoples struggle places "Freedom before accession." According to Korbel, the Bombay monthly, "Communist", supported his declaration with a significant comment : "It is the imperialists' game to disrupt the great democratic movement led by the National Conference... There is no doubt that the National Conference would defeat these disruptive efforts by placing in the forefront the

1. *Ibid*, p. 250.
2. *Ibid*.
3. G.M. Sadiq, *Kashmir Chod Do*, (Urdu), Sangam Publishers, Lahore, 1946, p. 50.

issue of ending the present autocratic regime in accordance with its programme."[1]

A still more optimistic note for socialists is struck by a Russian journalist, O. Orestov, who was referred to by Korbel after witnessing the events that led the Sheikh to power. He says : "This National Conference, headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, had always been in the lead in the peoples' struggle against the British colonizers...and it had the ready following of the population." Korbel adds : "After the tribesmen had been repelled from Srinagar the city, according to Orestove's description, was flooded with red flags, a red rosette on every breast, and the central square was renamed Red Square. Sheikh Abdullah's government, brought to power on the rising tide of a truly popular movement, had proved important in the face of Indian reactionaries... nevertheless in Kashmir this friendship (for the Soviet Union) and the peoples' interest in the life of the Soviet Union are particularly great."[1]

The implementation of socialist policies in all the spheres of the State was taken up after the National Conference came to power. The Sheikh once said, "We uprooted feudalism, and now we must work towards the realization of the *Naya Kashmir* by exploiting all the natural resources of the State."[3] The changes in the administration and land reforms made 'The Statesman' of Delhi comment, "Communist activity...has been on the increase in Kashmir for sometime and a marked change in their attitude towards the National Conference and the present administration is noticeable. Though small in number communists have already gained a toe-hold in the State. A number of them are working with the National Conference committees here and there. The Communists are, however, stated to be very critical of this organization and the State government which is run by the National Conference although criticism has been subdued and indirect. It is also understood that communists have got into local labour unions and similar

1. Josep Korbel, n. 5, p. 251.
2. *Ibid.*
3. S. M. Abdullah, n. 11, pp. 19-20.

organizations. It is commonly believed here that two prominent communist leaders of India managed to enter Kashmir."[1]

These apprehensions were voiced even by the reactionary press who suspected Sardar Kulvir Singh and Comrade Ranadive's entry into Kashmir as a secret mission. Many fellow-travellers visited Kashmir, and these visits are looked upon by Korbel as communist infiltration into the State. The fact was that since the leadership of the National Conference was mostly progressive, the reactionaries and their press exaggerated and misconstrued such events. The obvious basic policy of the National Conference was to end exploitation of every form. The Sheikh had reiterated this stand many a time, but after some achievement in this regard he said in 1951 : "The poor and the backward classes, whose life has been miserable and slavish for centuries, are to be changed and steps to this effect be taken. It must be made certain that the worker receive the wages for his labour and none should exploit him. We believe that the necessities of life should be provided at cheap rates to improve their standards of living. Accordingly, we have improved irrigation to produce more and, on the other hand, we have brought about a tremendous change in the relationship of the peasant and the owner of the land. Gradually, the peasant has become the owner of the land. He is freed from the burden of debts. His property, that were pawned, was returned to him. The chances of his getting more from his lands are more. I reiterate that our aim in social and economic spheres is to control all means of production and distribution among men... the final objective being to relieve the Kashmiri from the class of exploiters. We have faith that the trouble of man emanates from the exploitation of man by man and of nation by another nation. We have accomplished a lot to stop this exploitation so that all in the State enjoy a happy life."[2]

The assertion made in Chapter III that the top brass of the National Conference leadership were mostly socialists or

1. Josep Korbel, n. 5, p. 252.
2. S. M. Abdullah, *Presidential Address*, Gandhi Park, Brocas Press, 1951, pp. 7 & 8.

fellow-travellers, it was natural that by virtue of their sacrifices they should have occupied important position in the government. Amongst the socialists Sadiq was a prominent figure, about whom Korbel wrote :

> "Sadiq practised law and entered the Muslim Conference in 1934. Within three years of politics he contacted communist leaders in the Panjab, Abdullah Safdar and Fazel Elahi Qurban and, consequently, took part in anti-governmental activities. He then followed Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and participated at the foundation of the National Conference in 1939."[1]

Korbel speaks of Sadiq's administrative ability and energy which was in evidence during the 'Quit Kashmir' movement and, later, in organising the National Militia, Women's Defence Corpse and the National Cultural Front. He describes Sadiq as the undisputed leader of the labour organizations. Korbel writes : "In the summer of 1950 he (Sadiq) organised demonstrations in Srinagar in support of the Stockholm Peace Congress. In the fall of 1952 he organised a Peoples' Peace Congress in Jammu, and more recently he joined the Communist *chorus* in accusing the United States of waging germ warfare in Korea. He has been most active in disseminating through governmental channels and through the National Conference, communist propaganda materials. He maintains close contact with the communist leaders in India. On the Kashmir issue he has frequently used the most violent language about the Anglo-Imperialists and has had high gratifying words to say about the Soviet Union."[2]

The other members of the government with socialist convictions were D. P. Dhar, then Deputy Home Minister and Girdhari Lal Dogra, Finance Minister. Many in the Secretariat, Education Department and other Departments had progressive tendencies. There were by 1950 cells of such

1. Josep Korbel, n. 5, p. 252.
2. *Ibid*, p. 253.

people committed to socialism. Referring to Mr. Mohammed Afzal Beg, Josep Korbel writes : "The Revenue Minister, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, a man of peasant origin, was the leading spirit behind the land reforms in Kashmir. Though not a communist, he fell undoubtedly under their influence. In his book, "*On the Way to Golden Harvests*", in which he analysed the class interests of the working masses and the irreconciability of the capitalist and socialist systems, he wrote :

> "In so far as the State of J & K is concerned, we have decided to own that system which gives no quarter to production for private profit, where no private manipulation can bring economic crisis, endangering the life of millions. This decision of ours is only an implementation of the promises which the standard-bearer of freedom forces (S. M. Abdullah) had held out to the people from time to time. Building socialist order is our objective... the capitalist system is the biggest barrier to human progress."[1]

For the propagation of sccialist literature and communist creed, two shops were established—one in Jammu, run by Dhanwantry, and another in Kashmir, run by Dr. Niranjan Nath. '*Azad*' a daily paper was published by Kashmir Book Shop and *Shamsher* was published under the guidance of Dhanwantry. Dr. Niranjan Nath, however, guided and introduced many 'a cummunist call' in Srinagar along with Badri Nath (Nishat Press), Pir Abdul Azaiz (Chattabal) etc. B.P.L. Bedi, a non-Kashmiri communist, the author of *Naya Kashmir*, also instructed and educated many a youth in Kashmir and Jammu. Korbel considers him "eminence grise" behind the Abdullah Government. Freda Bedi, wife of Mr. Bedi, "sat on the governmental committee for the preparation of school text-books."[2]

1. *Ibid.*
2. *Ibid*, p. 254.

The socialist never formed a party which is considered to be an error on their part[1], yet their influence over the policies of the National Conference was the greatest. According to Korbel socialists had "decisive influence upon the policy of the government and without committing to public and official responsibility for government measures. This arrangement gives them the advantage of claming the credit of the government, introduces, for instance, the land reforms and of free criticism if it fails. The communists use the government machinery for their own ideological purposes and at the same time exploit the dissatisfaction of the masses."[2] Even though these influences may have been exaggerated by Josep Korbel, the fact remains that National Conference leaders accepted socialistic economy as the solution for all social and economic problems.

The freedom movement had made all labour unions to support the cause of the National Conference because not only did it produce men of conviction, but its programmes pertaining to economic and political life of the people of Kashmir were progressive. As early as 1919, labour first rebelled as discussed in Chapter I. In 1925 again labour unions provoked trouble in the governance of silk factory. This resulted in the establishment of socialist cells in almost all labour unions. Before 1947 these unions were Mazdoor Sabha, Kisan Sabha, Civil Transport Association, Sericulture and Silk Labour Union, Press Employees Union. The post-1947 period witnessed many more labour unions/organizations, like the Central Labour Union, Jammu Turpentine Labour Union, Rent Payers Association, Teachers Association, Telegraph Employees Association and Low Paid Employees Association. Even today most of these unions are influenced, and even led, by socialists. Today, men with progressive outlook outnumber others in almost all such associations.

1. Peer Giasuddin, a socialist in an interview and a lecture delivered by him accepted it with the research scholar.
2. Josep Korbel, n. 5, p.

The National Conference, having fought and secured independence for the State of Jammu and Kashmir, was to fulfil its commitment in the post-1947. Towards the fulfilment, a Constitution for the State was drafted by the Constituent Assembly on 17th day of November, 1956. Being a socialist document in essence, Part IV (Sections 12 to 25) in particular, is reproduced here with a view of locating its socialist dimensions.[1]

(12) The provisions contained in this part shall not be enforceable by any court, but the principles therein laid down are nevertheless fundamental in the Governance of the State and it shall be the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws.

(13) The prime object of the State consists with the ideals and objectives of the freedom movement envisaged in "New Kashmir" shall be the promotion of the welfare of the mass of the people by establishing and preserving a socialist order of society wherein all exploitation of man has been abolished and wherein justice—social, economic and political—shall inform all the institutions of national life.

(14) Consistently with the objectives out-lined in the foregoing section, the State shall develop in a planned manner the productive forces of the country with a view to enriching the material and cultural life of the people and foster and protect—

(*a*) the public sector where the means of production are owned by the State ;

(*b*) the co-operative sector where the means of production are co-operatively owned by individuals or groups of individuals ; and

(c) the private sector where the means of production are owned by an individual or a corporation employing labour ; provided that the operation of

1. The Constitution of J & K, J & K Govt. Press Srinagar, 1956, p. 7.

this sector is not allowed to result in the concentration of wealth or of the means of production to the common detriment.

(15) The State shall endeavour to organise and develop agriculture and animal husbandry by bringing to the aid of the cultivator the benefits of modern and scientific research and techniques so as to ensure a speedy improvement in the standard of living as also the prosperity of the rural masses.

(16) The State shall take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government.

(17) The State shall, in order to rehabilitate, guide and promote the renowned crafts and cottage industries of the State, initiate and execute well considered programmes for refining and modernising techniques and modes of production, including the employment of cheap power so that unnecessary drudgery and toil of the workers are eliminated and the artistic value of the products enhanced, while the fullest scope is provided for the encouragement and development of individual talent and initiative.

(18) The State shall take steps to separate the judiciary from the executive in the public services, and shall seek to secure a judicial system which is humane, cheap, certain, objective and impartial whereby justice shall be done and shall be seen to be done and shall further strive to ensure efficiency, impartiality and incorruptibility of its various organs of justice, administration and public utility.

(19) The State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing—

(*a*) that all permanent residents, men and women equally, have the right to work, that is, the right to receive guaranteed work with payment for labour in accordance with its quantity and quality

subject to a basic minimum and maximum wage established by law ;

(*b*) that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that permanent residents are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their sex, age or strength ;

(*c*) that all workers, agricultural, industrial or otherwise, have reasonable, just and humane conditions of work with full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities ;

(*d*) that all permanent residents have adequate maintenance in old age as well as in the event of sickness, disablement, unemployment and other class of undeserved want by providing social insurance, medical aid, hospitals, sanatoria and health resorts at State expense.

(20) The State shall endeavour—

(*a*) to secure to every permanent resident the right to free education upto the University standard ;

(*b*) to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years ; and

(*c*) to ensure to all workers and employees adequate facilities for adult education and part-time technical, professional and vocational courses.

(21) The State shall strive to secure—

(*a*) to all children the right to happy childhood with adequate medical care and attention ; and

(*b*) to all children and youth equal opportunities in education and employment, protection against exploitation, and against moral or material abandonment.

(22) The State shall endeavour to secure to all women—

(*a*) the right to pay for equal work ;

(*b*) the right to maternity benefits as well as adequate medical care in all employments ;

(*c*) the right to reasonable maintenance, extending to cases of married women who have been divorced or abandoned ;

(*d*) the right to full equality in all social, educational, political and legal matters ;

(*e*) special protection against discourtesy, defamation, hooliganism and other forms of misconduct.

(23) The State shall guarantee to the socially and educationally backward sections of the people special care in the promotion of their educational, material and cultural interests and protection against social injustice.

(24) The State shall make guard and promote the health of the people by advancing public hygiene and by prevention of disease through sanitation, pest and vermin control, propaganda and other measures, and by ensuring widespread, efficient and free medical services throughout the State and, with particular emphasis, in its remote and backward regions.

(25) The State shall combat ignorance, superstition, fanaticism, communalism, racialism, cultural backwardness and shall seek to foster brotherhood and equality among all communities under the aegis of a Secular State.

Kashmir and the U. N.

Socialist dimensions of the National Conference did not remain confined to the domestic problems of the State alone. They were projected in the foreign affairs as well, even though, after the accession, these were the domain of the Government of India, which had to place the Kashmir issue before the Security Council of the U.N. Many resolutions were passed by the Council on Kashmir and many commissions were appointed. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, in his Presidential address, referred to these in the following words :—

"Today the lot of our country is being discussed in conference of the U.N. We appealed to the U.N. in good faith so that the aggressor is condemned. Instead, the U.N. decided to appoint a mediator . we cannot permit Munich to be repeated in Kashmir. We believe mediation is to bring the aggressor and the aggressed at par, and it means our free-will is ignored."[1]

In a public meeting at Hazratbal Shrine on Id-i-Milad, the Sheikh said :—

"Today beauty of Kashmir is a source of trouble for us—every powerful government desires its occupation."[2]

On another occasion Shiekh Mohammad Abdullah said "Security Council has on the one hand not been able to understand the problem and, on the other, selfish and vested interests desire a division of the State, with a playground for the commonwealth forces."[3]

The National Conference and its communist associates, Korbel writes, "did not at all like the U.N. intervention in the Kashmir conflict... The Soviet Union in the Security Council and the Communist Party of India, therefore developed a well-concerted policy of undermining the mediatory efforts of the United Nations with the aim of eliminating them altogether. The National Conference joined in the camp on the local Kashmiri scene while continuing its policy of communization."[4]

A resolution was tabled at the Security Council meeting by U.S.A. and Britain in 1951, in which it was recommended that Kashmir should be put under international control. On

1. S. M. Abdullah, n. 11, p. 23.
2. *Halfiwafadari* : A speech, Hazratbal Shrine, Srinagar, New Kashmir Press, 4th January 1949, p. 11.
3. S. M. Abdullah, n. 22, p. 5.
4. Josep Korbel, n. 5, p. 255.

this suggestion Mr. G. M. Sadiq, spoke at one weekly meeting of the National Conference :—

> "You assuredly feel and understand that today our struggle is attacked by all reactionary forces. We should resolve it today to fight it out. Nothing shall come out of slogans and eloquent speeches. It would be wrong to leave our movement to its own lot at this stage."[1]

Sadiq also led a demonstration against imperialists intervention in Kashmir on 18th March, 1951.

The National Conference was outspoken on its stand on Kashmir which was also influenced by the socialist elements in the organization. Korbel writes :—

> "But the attitude of the National Conference, influenced as it was by communist members, was quite outspoken. It declared openly on 22nd April, 1948, that the Security Council resolution was yet another feature of power politics on which the Security Council has embarked over since its inception. The General Secretary of the National Conference, Maulana Masoodi, declared that with regard to the Kashmir issue the Imperialist powers, like U.S.A. and Britain, had made out Pakistan as an innocent party. This was being done to further their own ends with a view to establish bases here for the coming war."[2]

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah remarked then : "Imperialist powers saw Kashmir only as a neighbour of Russia and, therefore, an essential base in the encirclement of Russia for future aggression".

In the fall of 1949, the annual session of the National Conference was held in Sher-i-Kashmir Park, Srinagar. In his Presidential address, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah remarked that in case the decision makers in the Security Council are

1. Bansi Nirdosh, *Subhe Sadiq*, or *Memari-Kashmir*, Chand Press, Jammu, pp. 128-129.
2. Josep Korbel, n. 5. p. 256.

incapable of making the nations to act on the just decisions of the Council, then it is regrettable. In that, even Mr. Truman and Mr. Attlee should ask Pakistan to recognise the right of Kashmir over all parts of Kashmir occupied by Pakistan.[1] In the same session four resolutions were passed and the language used showed bitterness against the Anglo-American block. One of the resolutions referred to world tensions as "The direct consequences of the basic tussel between the forces of progress and reaction on the global scale."[2]

The communists of India at the time sympathized with this approach of the National Conference and its leadership. The *Peoples Age*, spokesman of the communists of India, wrote : "U.N. Commission's report on Kashmir to the Security Council is the culmination of the nefarious intrigues of the British and American imperialists against the democratic mass movement of Kashmir and Jammu. The policy that was being pursued by them till now, through the instigation of war and intervention in Kashmir with the help of Pakistan reactionaries was mainly the annihilation of the democratic mass movement and the enslavement of their people, and setting up on this soil of Anglo-American war bases directed against the socialist Soviet Union and the democratic forces in China, would now be attempted to be carried forward to completion through 'peaceful' means and under cover of the free and impartial plebiscite that will now be held under the direction of the military and political agents of American imperialism, marked as the U.N.O. Commission officers".[3]

Rajhans Krishen, a communist, wrote a book in support of the movement in Kashmir. The book was devoted to the task of examining the U.N. Commission's report on Kashmir. In the book Rajhans Krishen apprehended the establishment of a "military springboard" in Kashmir with the help of Pakistani and Indian capitalists. Thus, leaders inside the State, communists outside the State, and the Russian in the

1. S. M. Abdullah, n. 11, p. 22.
2. Josep Korbel, n. 5, p. 258.
3. *Ibid*, p. 257.

Security Council pursued the same policy pattern with regard to Kashmir.

However, for the first four years of debate on the Kashmir issue, Russians remained silent in the Security Council. They watched the happenings in Kashmir, and in the sub-continent of India and Pakistan. Once they were convinced that the freedom movement in Kashmir was peoples' revolt against the Dogra ruler and that the socialist programmes of the National Conference were implemented in the post-1947 period, Russians broke their silence. When British and American representatives at U.N. pursued their efforts towards the so-called reconciliation through a resolution on 21st April, 1948, Mr. Gromyko and his Ukrainian colleague, Mr. Tarasenka, abstained. Jacob Malik, the Soviet delegate at U.N. made a lengthy statement on 17th January, 1952, in the Security Council when Dr. Graham presented his third report on Kashmir. Jacob Malik said : "The United States and the United Kingdom are continuing as before to interfere in the settlement of the Kashmir question, putting forward one plan after another. All these plans are failing... (as they) are of an annexationist, imperialist nature, because they are not based on effort to achieve real settlement of the Kashmir question—the purpose of these plans is interference by the United Nations in the internal affairs of Kashmir, the prologation of the dispute between India and Pakistan on the question of Kashmir, and the conversion of Kashmir into a protectorate of the United States and United Kingdom".[1]

Further, the Russian representative added : "Finally, the purpose of these plans... is to secure the introduction of Anglo-American troops into the territory of Kashmir and convert Kashmir into an Anglo-American colony and a military and strategic base. All steps are to ensure that no opportunity should be given to the people of Kashmir themselves to decide their future without external pressure and without Anglo-American interference. This was to

1. *Ibid*, p. 260.

deprive the people of Kashmir of the right of self-determination. The problem can be solved if that status (of Kashmir) is determined by a Constituent Assembly—democratically elected by the Kashmiri people".[1]

Concerted action on the part of progressive Kashmiri leaders resulted in thwarting all designs of the imperialist and of complete identification of views, on various international issues and economic relations between India and Russia. This understanding stabilized the accession of the State to the Indian Union.

The thesis that socialist ideas impregnated the political movements in Kashmir between 1919 and 1947 in the most pronounced form is evident from the egalitarian nature of freedom struggles before 1930, of the 1931 non-communal rebellion, the socialist influences which gave final shape to the *Naya Kashmir* document and the Quit Kashmir movement. Such determining progressive thinking has also been shown in the works of the revolutionary poets, Mahjoor and Azad, the socialist programmes pursued by the government in Kashmir in post 1947 years and the successful rebuff of the reactionaries and imperialists at the U.N. by the Kashmiri leadership.

1. *Ibid.*

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